

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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A TALE OF TWO CITIES.

In Three Books.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

BOOK THE FIRST. RECALLED TO LIFE.

CHAPTER V. THE WINE-SHOP.

A LARGE cask of wine had been dropped and broken, in the street. The accident had happened in getting it out of a cart; the cask had tumbled out with a run, the hoops had burst, and it lay on the stones just outside the door of the wine-shop, shattered like a walnut-shell.

All the people within reach had suspended their business, or their idleness, to run to the spot and drink the wine. The rough, irregular stones of the street, pointing every way, and designed, one might have thought, expressly to lame all living creatures that approached them, had dammed it into little pools; these were surrounded, each by its own jostling group or crowd, according to its size. Some men kneeled down, made scoops of their two hands joined, and sipped, or tried to help women, who bent over their shoulders, to sip, before the wine had all run out between their fingers. Others, men and women, dipped in the puddles with little mugs of mutilated earthenware, or even with handkerchiefs from women's heads, which were squeezed dry into infants' mouths; others made small mud-embankments, to stem the wine as it ran; others, directed by lookers-on up at high windows, darted here and there, to cut off little streams of wine that started away in new directions; others, devoted, themselves to the sodden and lee-dyed pieces of the cask, licking, and even champing the moister wine-rotted fragments with eager relish. There was no drainage to carry off the wine, and not only did it all get taken up, but so much mud got taken up along with it, that there might have been a scavenger in the street, if anybody acquainted with it could have believed in such a miraculous presence.

A shrill sound of laughter and of amused voices—voices of men, women, and children—resounded in the street while this wine-game lasted. There was little roughness in the sport, and much playfulness. There was a special companionship in it, an observable inclination on the part of every one to join some other one, which led, especially among the luckier or lighter-hearted, to frolicsome embraces, drinking

of healths, shaking of hands, and even joining of hands and dancing, a dozen together. When the wine was gone, and the places where it had been most abundant were raked into a gridiron-pattern by fingers, these demonstrations ceased, as suddenly as they had broken out. The man who had left his saw sticking in the firewood he was cutting, set it in motion again; the woman who had left on a door-step the little pot of hot ashes, at which she had been trying to soften the pain in her own starved fingers and toes, or in those of her child, returned to it; men with bare arms, matted locks, and cadaverous faces, who had emerged into the winter light from cellars, moved away to descend again; and a gloom gathered on the scene that appeared more natural to it than sunshine.

The wine was red wine, and had stained the ground of the narrow street in the suburb of Saint Antoine, in Paris, where it was spilled. It had stained many hands, too, and many faces, and many naked feet, and many wooden shoes. The hands of the man who sawed the wood, left red marks on the billets; and the forehead of the woman who nursed her baby, was stained with the stain of the old rag she wound about her head again. Those who had been greedy with the staves of the cask, had acquired a tigerish smear about the mouth; and one tall joker so besmirched, his head more out of a long squalid bag of a nightcap than in it, scrawled upon a wall with his finger dipped in muddy wine lees—BLOOD.

The time was to come, when that wine too would be spilled on the street-stones, and when the stain of it would be red upon many there.

And now that the cloud settled on Saint Antoine, which a momentary gleam had driven from his sacred countenance, the darkness of it was heavy—cold, dirt, sickness, ignorance, and want, were the lords in waiting on the saintly presence—nobles of great power all of them; but, most especially the last. Samples of a people that had undergone a terrible grinding and re-grinding in the mill, and certainly not in the fabulous mill which ground old people young, shivered at every corner, passed in and out at every doorway, looked from every window, fluttered in every vestige of a garment that the wind shook. The mill which had worked them down, was the mill that grinds young people old; the children had ancient faces and grave voices; and upon them, and upon the

grown faces, and ploughed into every furrow of age and coming up afresh, was the sign, Hunger. It was prevalent everywhere. Hunger was pushed out of the tall houses, in the wretched clothing that hung upon poles and lines; Hunger was patched into them with straw and rag and wood and paper; Hunger was repeated in every fragment of the small modicum of firewood that the man sawed off; Hunger stared down from the smokeless chimneys, and started up from the filthy street that had no offal, among its refuse, of anything to eat. Hunger was the inscription on the baker's shelves, written in every small loaf of his scanty stock of bad bread; at the sausage-shop, in every dead-dog preparation that was offered for sale. Hunger rattled its dry bones among the roasting chesnuts in the turned cylinder; Hunger was shred into atomies in every farthing porringer of husky chips of potato, fried with some reluctant drops of oil.

Its abiding-place was in all things fitted to it. A narrow winding street, full of offence and stench, with other narrow winding streets diverging, all peopled by rags and nightcaps, and all smelling of rags and nightcaps, and all visible things with a brooding look upon them that looked ill. In the hunted air of the people there was yet some wild-beast thought of the possibility of turning at bay. Depressed and slinking though they were, eyes of fire were not wanting among them; nor compressed lips, white with what they suppressed; nor foreheads knitted into the likeness of the gallows-rope they mused about enduring, or inflicting. The trade signs (and they were almost as many as the shops) were, all, grim illustrations of Want. The butcher and the porkman painted up, only the leanest scraps of meat; the baker, the coarsest of meagre loaves. The people rudely pictured as drinking in the wine-shops, croaked over their scanty measures of thin wine and beer, and were gloweringly confidential together. Nothing was represented in a flourishing condition, save tools and weapons; but, the cutler's knives and axes were sharp and bright, the smith's hammers were heavy, and the gun-maker's stock was murderous. The crippling stones of the pavement, with their many little reservoirs of mud and water, had no footways, but broke off abruptly at the doors. The kannel, to make amends, ran down the middle of the street—when it ran at all: which was only after heavy rains, and then it ran, by many eccentric fits, into the houses. Across the streets, at wide intervals, one clumsy lamp was slung by a rope and pulley; at night, when the lamplighter had let these down, and lighted, and hoisted them again, a feeble grove of dim wicks swung in a sickly manner overhead, as if they were at sea. Indeed they were at sea, and the ship and crew were in peril of tempest.

For, the time was to come, when the gaunt scarecrows of that region should have watched the lamplighter, in their idleness and hunger, so long, as to conceive the idea of improving on his method, and hauling up men by those ropes and

pulleys, to flare upon the darkness of their condition. But, the time was not come yet; and every wind that blew over France shook the rags of the scarecrows in vain, for the birds, fine of song and feather, took no warning.

The wine-shop was a corner shop, better than most others in its appearance and degree, and the master of the wine-shop had stood outside it, in a yellow waistcoat and green breeches, looking on at the struggle for the lost wine. "It's not my affair," said he, with a final shrug of his shoulders. "The people from the market did it. Let them bring another."

There, his eyes happening to catch the tall joker writing up his joke, he called to him across the way:

"Say then, my Gaspard, what do you do there?"

The fellow pointed to his joke with immense significance, as is often the way with his tribe. It missed its mark, and completely failed, as is often the way with his tribe too.

"What now? Are you a subject for the mad-hospital?" said the wine-shop keeper, crossing the road, and obliterating the jest with a handful of mud, picked up for the purpose, and smeared over it. "Why do you write in the public streets? Is there—tell me thou—is there no other place to write such words in?"

In his expostulation he dropped his cleaner hand (perhaps accidentally, perhaps not), upon the joker's heart. The joker rapped it with his own, took a nimble spring upward, and came down in a fantastic dancing attitude, with one of his stained shoes jerked off his foot into his hand, and held out. A joker of an extremely, not to say wolfishly, practical character, he looked, under those circumstances.

"Put it on, put it on," said the other. "Call wine, wine; and finish there." With that advice, he wiped his soiled hand upon the joker's dress, such as it was—quite deliberately, as having dirtied the hand on his account; and then recrossed the road and entered the wine-shop.

This wine-shop keeper was a bull-necked, martial-looking man of thirty, and he should have been of a hot temperament, for, although it was a bitter day, he wore no coat, but carried one slung over his shoulder. His shirt-sleeves were rolled up, too, and his brown arms were bare to the elbows. Neither did he wear anything more on his head than his own crisply-curling short dark hair. He was a dark man altogether, with good eyes and a good bold breadth between them. Good-humoured-looking on the whole, but implacable-looking, too; evidently a man of a strong resolution and a set purpose; a man not desirable to be met, rushing down a narrow pass with a gulf on either side, for nothing would turn the man.

Madame Defarge, his wife, sat in the shop behind the counter as he came in. Madame Defarge was a stout woman of about his own age, with a watchful eye that seldom seemed to look at anything, a large hand heavily ringed, a steady face, strong features, and great composure of manner. There was a character about Ma-

dame Defarge, from which one might have predicated that she did not often make mistakes against herself in any of the reckonings over which she presided. Madame Defarge being sensitive to cold, was wrapped in fur, and had a quantity of bright shawl twined about her head, though not to the concealment of her large earrings. Her knitting was before her, but she had laid it down to pick her teeth with a toothpick. Thus engaged, with her right elbow supported by her left hand, Madame Defarge said nothing when her lord came in, but coughed just one grain of cough. This, in combination with the lifting of her darkly defined eyebrows over her toothpick by the breadth of a line, suggested to her husband that he would do well to look round the shop among the customers, for any new customer who had dropped in while he stepped over the way.

The wine-shop keeper accordingly rolled his eyes about, until they rested upon an elderly gentleman and a young lady, who were seated in a corner. Other company were there: two playing cards, two playing dominoes, three standing by the counter lengthening out a short supply of wine. As he passed behind the counter, he took notice that the elderly gentleman said in a look to the young lady, "This is our man."

"What the devil do *you* do in that galley there!" said Monsieur Defarge to himself; "I don't know you."

But, he feigned not to notice the two strangers, and fell into discourse with the triumvirate of customers who were drinking at the counter.

"How goes it, Jacques?" said one of these three to Monsieur Defarge. "Is all the spilt wine swallowed?"

"Every drop, Jacques," answered Monsieur Defarge.

When this interchange of christian name was effected, Madame Defarge, picking her teeth with her toothpick, coughed another grain of cough, and raised her eyebrows by the breadth of another line.

"It is not often," said the second of the three, addressing Monsieur Defarge, "that many of these miserable beasts know the taste of wine, or of anything but black bread and death. Is it not so, Jacques?"

"It is so, Jacques," Monsieur Defarge returned.

At this second interchange of the christian name, Madame Defarge, still using her toothpick with profound composure, coughed another grain of cough, and raised her eyebrows by the breadth of another line.

The last of the three now said his say, as he put down his empty drinking vessel and smacked his lips.

"Ah! So much the worse! A bitter taste it is that such poor cattle always have in their mouths, and hard lives they live, Jacques. Am I right, Jacques?"

"You are right, Jacques," was the response of Monsieur Defarge.

This third interchange of the christian name was completed at the moment when Madame

Defarge put her toothpick by, kept her eyebrows up, and slightly rustled in her seat.

"Hold then! True!" muttered her husband. "Gentlemen—my wife!"

The three customers pulled off their hats to Madame Defarge, with three flourishes. She acknowledged their homage by bending her head, and giving them a quick look. Then she glanced in a casual manner round the wine-shop, took up her knitting with great apparent calmness and repose of spirit, and became absorbed in it.

"Gentlemen," said her husband, who had kept his bright eye observantly upon her, "good day. The chamber, furnished bachelor-fashion, that you wished to see, and were inquiring for when I stepped out, is on the fifth floor. The doorway of the staircase gives on the little courtyard close to the left here," pointing with his hand, "near to the window of my establishment. But, now that I remember, one of you has already been there, and can show the way. Gentlemen, adieu!"

They paid for their wine, and left the place. The eyes of Monsieur Defarge were studying his wife at her knitting, when the elderly gentleman advanced from his corner, and begged the favour of a word.

"Willingly, sir," said Monsieur Defarge, and quietly stepped with him to the door.

Their conference was very short, but very decided. Almost at the first word, Monsieur Defarge started and became deeply attentive. It had not lasted a minute, when he nodded and went out. The gentleman then beckoned to the young lady, and they, too, went out. Madame Defarge knitted with nimble fingers and steady eyebrows, and saw nothing.

Mr. Jarvis Lorry and Miss Manette, emerging from the wine-shop thus, joined Monsieur Defarge in the doorway to which he had directed his other company just before. It opened from a stinking little black court-yard, and was the general public entrance to a great pile of houses, inhabited by a great number of people. In the gloomy tile-paved entry to the gloomy tile-paved staircase, Monsieur Defarge bent down on one knee to the child of his old master, and put her hand to his lips. It was a gentle action, but not at all gently done; a very remarkable transformation had come over him in a few seconds. He had no good-humour in his face, nor any openness of aspect left, but had become a secret, angry, dangerous man.

"It is very high; it is a little difficult. Better to begin slowly." Thus, Monsieur Defarge, in a stern voice, to Mr. Lorry, as they began ascending the stairs.

"Is he alone?" the latter whispered.

"Alone! God help him who should be with him!" said the other, in the same low voice.

"Is he always alone, then?"

"Yes."

"Of his own desire?"

"Of his own necessity. As he was, when I first saw him after they found me and demanded to know if I would take him, and, at

my peril, be discreet—as he was then, so he is now.”

“He is greatly changed?”

“Changed!”

The keeper of the wine-shop stopped to strike the wall with his hand, and mutter a tremendous curse. No direct answer could have been half so forcible. Mr. Lorry’s spirits grew heavier and heavier, as he and his two companions ascended higher and higher.

Such a staircase, with its accessories, in the older and more crowded part of Paris, would be bad enough now; but, at that time, it was vile indeed to unaccustomed and unhardened senses. Every little habitation within the great foul nest of one high building—that is to say, the room or rooms within every door that opened on the general staircase—left its own heap of refuse on its own landing, besides flinging other refuse from its own windows. The uncontrollable and hopeless mass of decomposition so engendered, would have polluted the air, even if poverty and deprivation had not loaded it with their intangible impurities; the two bad sources combined made it almost insupportable. Through such an atmosphere, by a steep dark shaft of dirt and poison, the way lay. Yielding to his own disturbance of mind, and to his young companion’s agitation, which became greater every instant, Mr. Jarvis Lorry twice stopped to rest. Each of these stoppages was made at a doleful grating, by which any languishing good airs that were left uncorrupted, seemed to escape, and all spoil and sickly vapours seemed to crawl in. Through the rusted bars, tastes, rather than glimpses, were caught of the jumbled neighbourhood; and nothing within range, nearer or lower than the summits of the two great towers of Notre-Dame had any promise on it of healthy life or wholesome aspirations.

At last, the top of the staircase was gained, and they stopped for the third time. There was yet an upper staircase, of a steeper inclination and of contracted dimensions, to be ascended, before the garret story was reached. The keeper of the wine-shop, always going a little in advance, and always going on the side which Mr. Lorry took, as though he dreaded to be asked any question by the young lady, turned himself about here, and, carefully feeling in the pockets of the coat he carried over his shoulder, took out a key.

“The door is locked then, my friend?” said Mr. Lorry, surprised.

“Ay. Yes,” was the grim reply of Monsieur Defarge?

“You think it necessary to keep the unfortunate gentleman so retired?”

“I think it necessary to turn the key.” Monsieur Defarge whispered it closer in his ear, and frowned heavily.

“Why?”

“Why! Because he has lived so long, locked up, that he would be frightened—rave—tear himself to pieces—die—come to I know not what harm—if his door was left open.”

“Is it possible!” exclaimed Mr. Lorry.

“Is it possible?” repeated Defarge, bitterly.

“Yes. And a beautiful world we live in, when it *is* possible, and when many other such things are possible, and not only possible, but done—done, see you!—under that sky there, every day. Long live the Devil. Let us go on.”

This dialogue had been held in so very low a whisper, that not a word of it had reached the young lady’s ears. But, by this time she trembled under such strong emotion, and her face expressed such deep anxiety, and, above all, such dread and terror, that Mr. Lorry felt it incumbent on him to speak a word or two of reassurance.

“Courage, dear miss! Courage! Business! The worst will be over in a moment; it is but passing the room door, and the worst is over. Then, all the good you bring to him, all the relief, all the happiness you bring to him, begin. Let our good friend here, assist you on that side. That’s well, friend Defarge. Come, now. Business, business!”

They went up slowly and softly. The staircase was short, and they were soon at the top. There, as it had an abrupt turn in it, they came all at once in sight of three men, whose heads were bent down close together at the side of a door, and who were intently looking into the room to which the door belonged, through some chinks or holes in the wall. On hearing footsteps close at hand, these three turned, and rose, and showed themselves to be the three of one name who had been drinking in the wine-shop.

“I forgot them, in the surprise of your visit,” explained Monsieur Defarge. “Leave us, good boys; we have business here.”

The three glided by, and went silently down.

There appearing to be no other door on that floor, and the keeper of the wine-shop going straight to this one when they were left alone, Mr. Lorry asked him in a whisper, with a little anger:

“Do you make a show of Monsieur Manette?”

“I show him, in the way you have seen, to a chosen few.”

“Is that well?”

“I think it is well.”

“Who are the few? How do you choose them?”

“I choose them as real men, of my name—Jacques is my name—to whom the sight is likely to do good. Enough; you are English; that is another thing. Stay there, if you please, a little moment.”

With an admonitory gesture to keep them back, he stooped, and looked in through the crevice in the wall. Soon raising his head again, he struck twice or thrice upon the door—evidently with no other object than to make a noise there. With the same intention, he drew the key across it, three or four times, before he put it clumsily into the lock, and turned it as heavily as he could.

The door slowly opened inward under his hand, and he looked into the room and said something. A faint voice answered something.

Little more than a single syllable could have been spoken on either side.

He looked back over his shoulder, and beckoned them to enter. Mr. Lorry got his arm securely round the daughter's waist, and held her; for he felt that she was sinking.

"A—a—a—business, business!" he urged, with a moisture that was not of business shining on his cheek. "Come in, come in!"

"I am afraid of it," she answered, shuddering.

"Of it? What?"

"I mean of him. Of my father."

Rendered in a manner desperate, by her state and by the beckoning of their conductor, he drew over his neck the arm that shook upon his shoulder, lifted her a little, and hurried her into the room. He set her down just within the door, and held her, clinging to him.

Defarge drew out the key, closed the door, locked it on the inside, took out the key again, and held it in his hand. All this he did, methodically, and with as loud and harsh an accompaniment of noise as he could make. Finally, he walked across the room with a measured tread to where the window was. He stopped there, and faced round.

The garret, built to be a dry depository for firewood and the like, was dim and dark: for, the window of dormer shape, was in truth a door in the roof, with a little crane over it for the hoisting up of stores from the street: unglazed, and closing up the middle in two pieces, like any other door of French construction. To exclude the cold, one half of this door was fast closed, and the other was opened but a very little way. Such a scanty portion of light was admitted through the sc means, that it was difficult, on first coming in, to see anything; and long habit alone could have slowly formed in any one, the ability to do any work requiring nicety in such obscurity. Yet, work of that kind was being done in the garret; for, with his back towards the door, and his face towards the window where the keeper of the wine-shop stood looking at him, a white-haired man sat on a low bench, stooping forward and very busy, making shoes.

ROME AND TURNIPS.

A THOUSAND years ago, and again almost another thousand years ago, strong Rome, possessing Britain as a province, ground our corn and ate our oysters with a hearty appetite. The clans of the long-haired, mustachioed and chin-shaven, tattoo-skinned, breeches-wearing original Britons wore the yoke restlessly; but it was firm upon their shoulders. They yielded up their warriors as Roman legionaries. A body of "Invincible younger Britons" was sent off to serve Rome in Spain. A like body of "Elder Britons" was sent to Illyria. There was a "twenty-sixth cohort of Britons" in Armenia. There was a troop of Britons forwarded even to Egypt. That was the shrewd policy of Rome. The warriors of each country were drained from it to maintain Roman dominion over any other

than the fatherland. Into this land there came then, to replace the natural defenders of the soil, legions of Dacians, Thracians, Sarmatians, even Romanised Indians and Moors. There has been picked up, in a field, trace also of an Egyptian among the men of Rome in Britain. For more than four centuries England was Roman. Rome herself may, during the first half of that time, have supplied many chief magistrates and military captains; furthermore, by the complex network of society, stray men, women, and children may have been drawn out of their home in Italy even as far as Britain. Let us believe also that enthusiastic epicures from Rome sometimes came over to Richborough (Rutupie) for the oyster season. But they were the nations at large who were sent to possess us. Countries absorbed into the Roman empire supplied their own able-bodied natives bearing Roman arms, adopting Roman habits, and discarding even the dear mother tongue for that of Rome. They spoke Latin, indeed, and spelt it without absolute devotion to its grammar; they built also Roman villas without absolute adherence to the regulations laid down by Vitruvius. What they learnt best was to enrich themselves in the true oppressive Roman way upon the province within which they ruled, while they remained true to discipline, and executed well the roads and military works on which they were employed. Soldiers begot not only more soldiers but also priests, traders, and tillers of the soil. There was no neglect of the commissariat; no lack of smelters and workers in metal or glass, coiners, potters, masons, carpenters, physicians. Races, no doubt, were mixed by intermarriage, but the Roman towns in England, which grew ample and rich, as their inhabitants fattened upon the available wealth of the land, were first colonised or occupied by legionaries differing in race, and certainly they had more points of contrast among themselves than one meets with to-day anywhere but on what are now called, as the coasts of Britain were then called, the confines of civilisation. The contrast must have been visible enough through the Roman varnish with which everything was coated. At Ellenborough there were Spaniards and Dalmatians, at Brougham Germans. Manchester was occupied by Frisians, Cirencester by Thracians and Indians, Wroxeter by Thracians. Now we are at Wroxeter, and have arrived there by a train of thought instead of the express train which conveyed us thither on a pleasant day some weeks ago.

Excavations at Wroxeter, the buried city of Uriconium. There was attraction in the news of these fresh diggings. Off we set, therefore. Let it be said, rather, off I set; for there was a time when I, too, was included in the toast of "All Friends Round the Wrekin." I have stood upon that large dropping from the spade of the arch enemy. He would block up the Severn with it, would he? I have stood on it in rainy and fair weather, at midnight and midnoon. I have threaded its needle's eye, dipped in its mystic eagle's bowl, seen from its top the spread-

ing of the dawn on summer mornings; and on many a winter's night, when riding at its foot, laughed at the dismal failure of its very best efforts to look inhospitable. If there is a lump of earth in the inanimate world that I can call my friend, it is old Wrekin. Now antiquaries may read through their spectacles of ancient Uriconium. "What is that?" I said to myself, "but old Wrekin over again." The Romans had no W or K, they were obliged to write down Wrekin Urecin; ium is only the addendum, which says there's the name of a place. Vowels are pronounced and altered in all sorts of ways: so ancient Uriconium is old Wrekinium. Alas! a nursing of my poor friend's lying dead and buried at his feet.

When I heard about the disinterment, I remembered the grave well. There was a sort of colossal ruined headstone over it, called the Old Wall, and that was all that marked the resting-place of my friend's first and only child. Wroxeter is but a puny little changeling. Merit it has; it neither sits upon nor comes too near the grave of the dead city.

The Romans had a sensible way of accepting all the names of places that they found in conquered countries, altering them as little as might be for the necessary adaptation to their Latin throats and tongues. Some of the legionaries in Britain, who had new cities to name, seem to have taken words that pleasantly reminded them of their own country; but the common rule was followed when a town at the base of an important hill, which was a landmark throughout the surrounding region, took the name of the hill, and became Uricon-ium or Wrekin town. More great hills than this one were called Wrekin by the British. Urachean means heaps of earth; and that was the first form of the word Wrekin. The Romans did not pronounce badly when they spelt it—for they had two forms—Virocon or Uricon. And it happens that, when they called their place Uricon-ium, the British name and Roman ending, meant the town under a heap of earth. Prophecy was in the word. There is no doubt now about the heap of earth over the town—shovels are in it; and there is no doubt about the Roman ending.

That heap of earth on the old Roman town concealing all its skeletons, except, as it may be, a bony index finger represented by the stones of the Old Wall, is resolute to speak. In spite of all the efforts made to stop its mouth with turnip-crops and corn—for it is arable land upon the surface—it cries out, "Look into me. Pay the men for their turnips, and away with them. Dig me, I say, for the knowledge I contain."

Nobody who has left Shrewsbury by the road, against which is built Lord Hill's column, forgets the scenery at Ateham. It is four or five miles out of town, impressive for no grandeur at all, but for a tranquil beauty pleasant to look back upon from any day in life. As you cross there the neat little stone bridge over the Severn, the river below winds among, and sometimes overflows, the greenest meadows, here and there

stealing an island out of them. There are water-birds; there is a country church on a smooth bank of turf; and there is a great old inn, once brisk with coaching business, but now fast asleep. On the other side the road is skirted by the pleasant curve of a park-paling; the ground undulates beyond. The Wrekin looks important, close before us to the right; and if we glance behind us to the left, there is a bright landscape bounded by sharp outlines of hills, the most conspicuous of all being Caer Caradoc, on which legend declares (and I religiously believe) Caractacus stood for the last time at bay among his Roman hunters. There he fought, with his wife and daughter watching from the mountain-top. His Britons were defeated, and the women of his household, captured by the Roman legionaries, were then marched hitherward. To this city of Uriconium they must have been brought. Here, doubtless, they slept, or sought in vain to sleep, upon the first or second night after their seizure.

For here we are at Uriconium. Under the quiet Ateham church lie a few dead roots of the city wall. Great fragments of columns from the temple of one of the gods or goddesses, worshipped in Uriconium, lie at this moment in the churchyard on each side of the path, by which the villagers go up to worship Him who gave life to us all. A very little way below the bridge there is the ford by which, at Uriconium, the Roman legions crossed the Severn. There is a tongue of land there, and on a platform of slightly eminent ground, naturally smooth, by which the ford is commanded, there are grassy tumours, longing to be opened. By what sort of works the ford was protected we have only to open those tumours and see. From this point we walk over the foundations of the ancient town wall, running upland from the river, and then rounding off to form an oval ring. There is nearly everywhere a slight elevation of the ground to mark it, and where that is lost we may yet trace something of the hollow of the trench outside. The walls form an irregular oval parallel to the river, and their circuit is of not less than three miles. In tracing them, we pass over ploughed fields and pasture fields; once we pass through the garden of a cottage where the capital of the column of a Roman temple serves for a pumpstone. Within the circuit there is hardly a shed built. The massive fragment of old wall, the one morsel of ruin that crops out from underground, is the chief, and almost the only building visible.

The undulation of the ground enables us to stand upon some little eminence, from which we see nearly the whole grave at a glance. At a glance we may then also see that the entire skeleton of a large Roman town must truly lie there underneath the clods. The soil consists of ruin, modified on the surface by the action of the air, the plough, the harrow, and manure cart—these for centuries upon centuries. Still the soil is discoloured by its contents. We happen to see it as ploughed ground, and the rich red of the surrounding fields contrasts obviously with

the duller hue of land that lies over the city. We tread upon that land. From a sunk lane between hedges, fresh with newly opened leaves, we turn to a gate opening on a ploughed field, called by countrymen, because of the strange stones and wrought ware that have been always found in it, the Old Works. As we stride over the clods, we need not stoop an inch to perceive that at every step we set our feet on bits of Roman building materials that have been inextricably blended with the soil. The dullest ploughboy working here has on his lips a form of the old Roman word for money. He picks up *denarii*, and calls them *dinders*. Let him work in what field he may within the walls of *Uriconium*, it is but a common thing for the ploughman to find six or seven *dinders* in a morning before dinner. All the people hereabouts have *dinders* in their cottages—may have them by the pint—and there was a time, I believe, when the antiquary could, without any difficulty, purchase a handful for a shilling: It was here that one of our best Roman antiquaries got that unique coin with a full-faced portrait of *Carausius*, now in the British Museum. I can believe it to be true that, after it was given him, he turned aside into a hedge to reassure himself that it was really so choice a treasure, and brushed tears of emotion from his eyes to look at it.

There the town lies in the clods, a treasury of knowledge. Anglo-Saxons, Anglo-Normans, Englishmen of every age have passed over it with plough and harrow; that is all. Strange curiosities have come to the surface. Some time ago the hypocaust of one of its houses happens to have been opened, and was described to the Society of Antiquaries; the description will be found in the ninth volume of the *Archæologia*. "There's a field there," said a labourer to me, "where we once struck the plough on a great stone. We dug it about, and put the plough horses to it, and fetched more, and couldn't stir it. So we let it be. But we *do* think there's something precious underneath that stone."

The whole town lies in its ruins; sheep have fed and corn has grown over them, but the ploughshare penetrates not far. From the day of its devastation until now the entire ground plan of one of the great midland towns of Roman Britain has lain unobserved. Of its streets and houses, its public buildings, its defences, there is little doubt that we may trace the outline by uncovering foundation walls, within which there lie heaped in ruin tens of thousands of memorials of British Rome.

Last year Mr. Thomas Wright, the best popular authority upon the subject, suggested that it would be well to begin digging at *Wroxeter*: A subscription was raised, and digging was begun at once, because it was then winter. In winter the surface ground lies fallow, in summer it bears crops; and the farmer by whom the commencing field is rented vows that he would not take all Rome for his turnips.

Excavation was commenced at the most obvious place, beside the one up-standing piece of ruin, which is about twenty feet high and fifty

or sixty feet in length. Nobody knew to what it had belonged; that was a problem worth solution. It was required, however, by the tenant of the field, as has been required elsewhere under like circumstances, that as fast as the ground was opened and probed it should be closed again; all was to be without prejudice to the turnips. By this laborious process of opening and closing, the foundations of the Old Well were traced on, and it was found to have belonged to a great structure unlike anything yet found in England. Within massive walls there is enclosed a space, two hundred and twenty-six feet long and thirty wide; it is paved with small bricks set in an ordinary Roman pattern, known as herring-bone among antiquaries. Along its whole length it is bordered on each side by a passage included between the outer and an inner wall. Fourteen feet is the breadth of one of these long passages, sixteen feet of the other. One passage ends in a room having a handsome tessellated pavement. Outside this great building, and close to it, was the pavement of a street. This was formed of small round stones, after the fashion of which examples still are to be seen even in *Shrewsbury* itself. There was trace also of a cross street running in the line of *Watling-street*, the famous Roman road upon which *Uriconium* was an important halting-place. Into one of the passages by which this great building was bounded there were found two doorways; of which one had been more used than the other, for the massive square stone forming the threshold of each was, in one case, much worn by the feet of those who had passed over it to worship the god, to admire the gladiator, or to seek the presence of the judge.

To the wall of the great court-house or basilica, temple or place of combat, important houses were attached. On the side of the erect fragment that does not face the present road there are distinctly to be seen the lines of fracture from which vaulted roofs, once joined to them, have fallen down over the houses they once sheltered. I do not say that it was much to find here the outlines of a handsome mansion, chambers with tessellated floors, a famous drain, the principal room, with that circular ending in a sort of alcove so characteristic of a Roman house—a notion is, that the alcove contained a household altar, parted by a curtain from the room itself—and under the great room a hypocaust, or heating-room. The chief rooms of Roman houses were almost invariably warmed by a furnace which communicated with a hot-air chamber under the floor. Dozens of hypocausts have been uncovered, all containing the rows of little columns made of piles of tile, with an occasional mass of stone that supported the floor over it. Such a floor was formed of a thick layer of cement coated upon the surface with patterns and pictures formed of little cubes of divers colours. The hypocaust just opened under the old wall at *Uriconium* is of the common sort. There is the furnace chamber and there are the warm steps down which domestics came to tend the fire.

There are the ashes of fires that were quenched some fifteen hundred years ago; there is the soot they left; but, after all, more interesting hypocausts have been discovered. One found at Cirencester contained upright flue tiles and openings in its wall that evidently were part of an apparatus for conveying hot air through the walls to upper rooms. A hypocaust in the great villa uncovered long since at Woodchester, in Gloucestershire, is even more elaborate in its details. Of the hundreds of such chambers now hidden among the clods at Wroxeter, the one that had been uncovered when I paid my visit to the excavation was in itself, therefore, no specially important specimen.

But let us jump down into it. The few pounds at the disposal of the Excavation Committee are being wisely spent under the active superintendence of its honorary secretary, Doctor Henry Johnson, of Shrewsbury, my friendly guide over the ground. They could set only three or four spades at work, and the earth thrown up from one trench has to be thrown back before the next two feet of soil can be dug into. It is essential that the turnips should be borne in mind. The tenant of the field must not be trifled with. He has been offered ample compensation for his crop if he will grant the use of his ground; but he is a thriving man and a stubborn. He will have no compensation—he will have his turnips. We have jumped down, then, into the little group of trenches, following the lines of a few Roman house walls.

There is a bright spring sun over head, the old wall standing close by looks blank at us; here and there a stray antiquary clammers among the rubbish, careless of dirt stains; an attentive gentleman on the crest of a dirt heap explains Roman antiquities to some young ladies in pink and blue, who have made Wroxeter the business of a morning drive. An intelligent labourer, who seems to be a sort of foreman of the works, waits to disclose to the honorary secretary the contents of a box in which it is his business to deposit each day's findings of small odds and ends.

What has he got in it? Bones of dead Romans with bones of the mutton the Romans ate. Fragments of the red Samian pottery, on which the Romans served their banquets, and from which they pledged each other, and drank to the eternity of Rome: a rusty key without a lock: the ever-pointed pen, the style, with which a hand once living has, in this long-buried home, written dead mandates, messages, and words of friendship on the wooden tablets spread with wax, which he has then closed, tied up, and sent by his messenger, presently to receive back with his words erased, and the reply to them standing in their place. Was there a daughter of the house who used this rusty pen when it was bright, and wrote, and erased and wrote again, while her hand shook with her heart's beating. There lies the rusty style among the bones, the broken wine-cups, and the mouldered keys. Near it, is one of the

bone hair-pins that are always found among ruins like these. How long is it since out of a young heart's joyousness a girl sang, while she smoothed the hair it fastened, and a flattering slave held the small metal looking-glass before the merry eyes that were intent upon the sticking of that pin through precisely the right part of the glossy knot? What is this rusty bit of metal? It once bound the framework of a lyre. Here, too, is a ridiculous little figure of a cock modelled in lead, and what is that? It is a child's toy. Such grotesque little images of animals in lead or bronze are common among Roman ruins. Tiny Thracians nursed that ugly little cock, and did the crowing for it. It is a rude figure, and of lead instead of bronze. A slave's child may have had it for a plaything. A slave may in some half-hour of rest from toil have made it for his little playfellow. But, see! Here is the little playfellow himself. Pickaxes are working with the tenderest care upon the earth in one corner of a room by the hypocaust. Among strange treasures of the past, bones of a child are appearing.

Three skeletons of adults have already been found there. One lay crouched in a corner. Near it there was found upon a stone (among the ashes of the bag that had contained it) a heap of copper money, one hundred and eighteen coins. Now I stand by and see the bones and broken head of a young child drawn from the ruins. The invaders who laid waste the town either pursued and massacred these fugitives; or here they crouched, while the flames of the burning city roared and cracked over head: so here they perished, and were crushed under the falling walls.

If we look to the side of a trench at any part of the excavation, we observe that the foundations of the town lie hidden simply below the heap of its own ruin. There, are the roofing slates still with the nails in many of their holes. Practical men judge from its appearance that this slate must have been brought from Bettwys Coed by the Romans. In that place are dug up the millstones used for grinding down the household corn, and, in a basement cellar lately opened, there is the charred mass of the household store of corn still to be most distinctly recognised. One of the millstones is a foreign stone, imported, perhaps, from Andernach, for use in the kitchens of the Roman gentlemen of England. We find also the smaller kitchen mortars made of pottery roughened inside with flint, used for the pounding of meat, and preparation of made dishes. Here is a bottle declared to have been made at Broseley with the Broseley clay, now famous in tobacco-pipes. Here is the huge earthen handle of a jar for household stores. The Romans made great use of pottery. They used upon their dinner-tables fine decorated Samian-ware imported from abroad and made coarser pottery of sundry qualities for many uses, not only for uses to which now we apply bottles and boxes, but even for money-chests, and, as it would seem, cards or admission tickets. They had extensive

potteries upon the Medway, and glass works near Brighton. Wherever the Romans have been living their broken pots are strewn about. So is their money. So much strewing of money is, to a people that takes good care of its pence, unaccountable. When the Roman amphitheatre was opened at St. Albans, coins were found scattered over its whole area, and this is but a fair example of a general fact which has led some antiquaries to declare that it was a piece of Roman pride to sow small coinage in the ground that Romans occupied, in order that the names of Roman emperors and the reminders of their glory might be dug out of the earth for our instruction.

The diggings behind the old wall at Wrothester, in which we stand, uncover only a part of the basement of a single house. Whether the upper part of Roman houses in this country was built of timber is a question not yet solved, and there is nothing found here yet that serves for its solution. This house had certainly an excellent slate roof, and plenty of glazed windows; not only the quantity, but also the quality of the glass being remarkable. One piece of it evidently shows that it was cast like plate glass in a mould. Fragments of delicate glass vessels, beads, brooches, and armlets of women, the peculiar neck-chains of men known as the torques, but as yet found here only in bronze, rings, a signet seal, two little household gods about four inches high, a Venus and a Diana, bolts, nails, knives, and stone knife-handles, even a clasp-knife (for the Romans did carry such knives), a whetstone, an axe, the print of a sandal on a pavement, made by some thoughtless man who stepped on it when it was newly made, are found under these ruins. I need not multiply the list. As in all Roman diggings, so also here there is abundant testimony to the Roman love of oysters. There are the bones also of all sorts of eatable animals, and there are so many spurred bones of the cock's leg, that we may suppose that the Thracian once tenanted the premises kept fighting-cocks.

But we go back to the child's broken skull. There are two layers of ashes visible in a section of the soil, which possibly may inform us that the town twice suffered capture and destruction. The Romans themselves tell us no more of Uriconium than that it was one of their large towns in Britain. Near the fastnesses of warlike clans in Welsh hills, it may have fronted many an assault of the more independent Britons, while it held in subjection the weak tribes herding in forest camps or miserable villages, of which a few rows of pits are the extant remains. Often incensed against the oppressions that accompanied the Roman domination, there may have been a time when British warriors, mustering in their strength, plunged through the ford, and overmatching the armed Thracians who thronged to the fort, had rushed, mingling wild cries with wilder cries of despairing women and children, through the narrow alleys that were streets in Uriconium. There were forefathers of those Thracians who had followed Alexander of Macedonia to India. Thrace once had been in Greece, but not of it. Its people refused the Greek

tongue. Its affinities and those of all the tribes whose land Roman possession caused to be named Roumelia, were for Roman ways of thought and speech. Desperate must have been the fight of Thracian and Briton met in the tortuous and narrow streets, usual in any Roman town, where there was little more than room for one man in the front to shake his spear or swing his sword. Crowds from behind pressed on the combatants. Escape from the press into new fields of action, into rich harvests of death and plunder, was through the house-doors. Then women and old men caught children up, and fled into the cellars or the hypocausts. The sword or the fire followed them. The wine-jar was drained and broken. Gold, silver, and all portable treasure, was snatched from the wreck by the plunderer. Blood and wine ran in the streets; there were songs of revelry, yells of combatants, curses of prisoners, and shrieks of women, until evening, when the victors retired, kindling fire in the houses as they went. Then the British women, watching on the far heights of Caer Caradoc, exulted as they saw the city of the haughty legionaries shine through the dark night like a beacon fire.

That may have been one day of ruin. But what the last day of ruin was, we do not know. Possibly, we have but to dig and learn.

Before I left the field, in one corner of which the small beginning of an excavation has been made, the tenant farmer happened to make his appearance. The ground belongs to the Duke of Cleveland. The excavators had their leave to dig from the duke, the steward, and the tenant himself. It had first been understood that digging should cease, and all holes be filled up, by the end of March. Extension of time to the end of April had been afterwards conceded. It was then but the first week in April, and the farmer's impatience led him to pelt the ears of the gentleman who has most generously taken upon himself the laborious duties of an honorary overseer and secretary with oaths enough to sow the entire field with curses if they could be scattered bodily about. He swore that he should come no more to the field, that he would allow no more visitors from Shrewsbury to put up horses in his stables, that he would lock his gate on the next morning, and so forth, and so forth. It appears that he has kept his word. Those diggings have been pursued, therefore, no further.

Holders of other ground within the walls of the old town are interested in the diggings. They live close to a great mining district in which coal and iron, means of present and of future power, are the objects sought. This digging back into the power of the past is a new sort of mining to excite their interest. They offer no unreasonable obstacle to search. Already, therefore, the ground has been tapped in a fresh place with immediate results. The first thing that came to the surface was a stone head of the god Pan, with a look of wonder on its countenance. There has been found a mould

also for the coinage, which it thus appears that Uriconium had right to utter.

If we can grant public money for the uncovering of history at Nineveh, is it quite fair that we should leave to a few private subscribers of guineas such a work as the digging up of monuments that will throw light into one of the obscurest and most interesting periods of our own British history? Why should we not have at Wroxeter what we may have, the complete unearthing of an important Roman town? There is nothing to remove but a few feet of soil encumbered with nothing but a grudging farmer, whose passion is turnips.

Over the greater number of the Roman towns modern towns stand. The skeleton of an old Roman town lies under the city of London, but we cannot pull down St. Paul's and the Exchange, Cheapside and Cannon-street, to get at it. Though somewhat encumbered there is certainly good digging at St. Albans, where the fashionable Roman town of Verulamium lies in the clods; there is good digging too at Kenchester and at Aldborough in Yorkshire. There villagers dig up Rome in their gardens, and as you walk up the village street, you see over cottage doors such inscriptions as "Tessellated pavements, coins, &c. Admission, sixpence each." "Basilica with Greek inscriptions." "Hypocaust, Sudatory, Mosaic Pavements. Admission, each sixpence." Or

"This is the Ancient Manor House,
And in it you may see
The Romans works,
A great Curiosity."

The great Roman villas at Woodchester and Big-nor, raised by Romans who had grown rich with the wealth of a subject province, are also worth national care. I do not wish to confine attention to one place alone. But of the few places in which extensive excavation is possible, there is none, I believe, in which the uncovering of a town thoroughly worth complete examination may be made, at comparatively slight expense, so truly complete as at Wroxeter.

PIANOFORTE LESSONS.

Or all the false household gods, that are not gods, but demons—of all the hideous skeletons that mope and mow in corners of peaceful dwellings, there is nothing more detestable than a thoroughly bad and new piano. An instrument whose keys are heavy and clogged, and refuse to move under any but the most muscular grasp; whose wires are dumb for any harmonious utterances, and find speech only for a loose, short tinkling sound, that is thoughtful enough to die away as soon as produced; but whose outer shell, if not in accordance with the severest decorative taste, is highly polished and showy to the eye, is nothing but a musical, melancholy, delusive apple of the Dead Sea. The mechanism of such an instrument is worn and faded with age, while its case is so new that the damp of nature has hardly left the wood. Many thousands of such pianos are

annually made in this country, and disposed of through an elaborate organisation with tolerable success. They are always well advertised as bargains sold under peculiar circumstances, and purchasers are always ready to be caught by such a taking device. I have not always been so worldly-wise myself. It was only the other day that I bought an instrument in this way, which has since, I am happy to state, been turned into profitable use as a mustard-and-cress bed. The record of my experience may be a warning to those who have the same money and the same desire to buy a piano, and who are, at present, as innocent as I once was, but never hope to be again.

The first piano that I visited was described in the advertising columns of the leading daily journal as "a sweet and elegant instrument, chaste in design, pliable in touch, with all the latest improvements; the property of a lady who was going to Sierra Leone." The address was a lodging-house in a genteel decayed neighbourhood; and I was struck by the contrast between the brilliant face of the instrument, and the faded appearance of the well-worn furniture in the room.

"You haven't had it long, ma'am?" I said, addressing the lady who was about to proceed to Sierra Leone.

"No, sir," she replied, "and there's the annoyance. If I'd known my medical man was going to order me to Sirry Leony for the benefit of my health, I shouldn't have bought it, as I did, only two months ago."

"That's rather a curious place to be ordered to for your health, ma'am," I said; "the most fatal spot for Europeans on the globe."

"I leave it to my doctor," she replied, promptly, "who knows my constitution best. Shall I have the pleasure of sending the piano home at fifty pounds?"

"Thank you," I replied, "I have got my daughter to consult, but I will lose no time in letting you know."

"There are two other persons after it," she returned, as she showed me to the door; "and if you could oblige me during the day?"

"Oh, certainly," I said, "you may consider it done."

I did not decide to purchase this "chaste and pliable instrument;" and I believe its nominal owner did not go to Sierra Leone, as I saw the same advertisement repeated, at intervals, for several months after this interview.

The next piano that I visited was one described in very similar terms, except that it was the property of a bereaved parent. Children will die, and pianos must be sold, and as public inspection was invited, I got over any natural delicacy that I might have felt in trespassing, as a stranger, upon the sacred domains of private grief.

The address was again a lodging-house in the same neighbourhood, with very similar furniture, and a very similar instrument—so similar, in fact, that it might have been the identical one I had gazed upon a few weeks before. A female servant attended me during the inspection.

"Missus," said the girl, handing me a written paper, "as put down the lowest she'll take, an' if you don't like that amount, p'raps, she ses, you'll make a offer."

"Isn't your mistress at home, then?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," replied the girl; "but she never comes into this room, and never will until that pianny's moved out of it."

"Indeed!" I observed.

"No, sir," continued the girl, "becos you see it belonged to Miss Mariar, who was the fav'rite child."

"It looks very new," I answered, "as if the child hadn't used it much."

"Lor' bless you, sir!" returned the girl, "Miss Mariar thought nothink of 'aving a new pianny ev'ry week, an' the men was always a-muckin' the stairs in bringing 'em in, or takin' 'em out."

"Is Miss Maria, as you call her, the child that's dead?" I asked.

"Yes, sir," she answered, "I think she is."

I at once took my leave, without any further remarks, and, as the door closed behind me, I fancied I heard a somewhat angry conversation between the girl and some other female voice (perhaps the invisible mistress's) in the passage.

Unfavourable as were my impressions of the two last visits, I resolved to persevere in my search; and the next advertisement that attracted me was one in which an aged man, whose sands of life had nearly run out, announced his wish to provide a new home for his piano before his death.

"You've kept it in excellent condition," I remarked to the venerable-looking owner, for it seemed to me as new and as showy as the other two I had taken the trouble to examine.

"I have," he replied, "and I shouldn't like to part with it to any man who wouldn't treat it as well. It's been a companion to me for many years, and I respect it."

"A very proper feeling," I remarked, "and I hesitate in offering to deprive you of such a companion."

"Not at all, sir," he answered quickly—"not at all. With one foot in the grave, it's not proper that I should stand with the other foot in a piano. I've no friends or relations—none whatever—the instrument's yours for fifty pounds."

"I think," I said, "I must take time to consider before I decide."

"Why?" he asked, sharply. "You're a man of business: so am I."

"True," I answered, "but this is a transaction, like marriage, which a man seldom enters into more than once during a life."

"Pay me five-and-forty pounds," he said, "and the loss of the difference will fall upon the charity to which I shall give the money."

"I think I must decline the purchase altogether," I replied.

"You've either been playing upon my feelings, sir," he said, with much energy, "or wasting my time."

"Neither," I replied.

"Perhaps you are looking for a hurdy-gurdy?" he asked, sarcastically.

"Wrong again," I returned; "the fact is, I have seen this instrument before, at the house of a lady who ought, by this time, to be at Sierra Leone."

A minute but peculiar mark on one of the keys had enabled me to satisfy myself about this discovery, which turned out to be right. As I took my leave of the pianoforte proprietor, whose sands of life—according to the advertisement—had nearly run out, I noticed a slight change in the position of his wig, to say nothing of his altered tone and manner, which made him more youthful by thirty years.

My experience by this time ought to have satisfied me that little pecuniary benefit was to be derived from hunting for bargains out of the regular order of trade. Curiosity, however, led me on; and the little knowledge I had already gained produced a feeling of confidence—perhaps over-confidence—in my wisdom and keenness that gave an additional zest to the pursuit.

The next piano that I visited was the property of a widow lady in reduced circumstances, who was compelled to part with some of the luxuries that had adorned her once happy home. The address was still the same kind of front parlour in a house let out for lodgings, and the piano was still the same kind of gay, showy, got-up-looking instrument, refusing in its shiny coat of sticky, treachy varnish, to harmonise with the other threadbare and dusty trappings of the room. After a few minutes' delay, the lady made her appearance, dressed in an ordinary vulgar dress, and with nothing of the widow about her except a particularly large and frightful cap, which she had evidently put on in a hurry, to attend me in what she considered becoming costume.

"You'll excuse me, sir," she said, with emotion, "if I seem to hurry you, but you know how painful it must be to me to sell anything that belonged to him, when he's only been dead a month—a month come next Wednesday."

"Indeed!" I said, with a voice of sympathy. "Is it a six three-quarter octave?"

"No, sir," she returned, with a deep sigh, "he couldn't a-bear anything larger than a six-and-a-half. He never had strength to play upon it, though he gave eighty-five guineas for it a month before he died; and I suppose I mustn't ask any one more than sixty?"

"I thought it seemed very new," I replied; "unseasoned, if I may use the term."

"No, sir," she said, "not unseasoned. New, if you like, but not unseasoned; he was too good a judge for that; and his last words almost were, 'Mary Anne, if you let that instrument go for less than I gave for it, you'll do yourself an injury.'"

I went direct from the widow's house, of course without having made a purchase, to look at the piano of a widower in reduced circumstances, which, my advertisement list told me, was for sale in the next street. The instrument might have been the twin-brother of the widow's piano, and the widower might have

been the husband of the widow. The house was again a lodging-house; the apartment was again a faded front parlour; and the bereaved owner of the property was a middle-aged man, who had huddled on a shabby black coat over a blue shirt and a highly-fanciful waistcoat, which gave him the appearance of a professional cricketer, made hurriedly decent to attend a funeral.

"You'll pardon me, sir," he said, in tones of deep feeling, "if I appear to hasten your departure, but you know how trying it is to dispose of anything that belonged to her, when she's only been dead a fortnight—a fortnight next Saturday."

"Indeed!" I replied, in the same tone I had used to the widow, for the speech was, in substance, the same. "Is it a full seven octave!"

"No, sir," he replied, with a heavy sigh, "her fancy always ran upon six and three-quarters. It seems only yesterday that I gave eighty guineas for it, before she was taken from us, and now I suppose I mustn't expect to get more than sixty pounds in cash?"

"I'm afraid," I answered, "that it's too new—too unseasoned for me to venture on its purchase."

"Too new, sir? too unseasoned?" he exclaimed, in astonishment; "don't say that, because I know she was too good a judge to be imposed on. It was only a few days before she was taken from us that she said to me, 'Robert, it was very kind of you to spend your poor mother's legacy in buying me a piano; but it'll be no loss to you. You'll get back all you gave for it, if you put it up to auction.'"

Having had enough of this mixture of the grave and the huckster's shop, I passed, still piano-less, to a more cheerful atmosphere. A young man, in chambers, had advertised an instrument for sale, which he had unexpectedly won at a raffle; and though his direction was not very promising, I resolved to pay him a visit. The instrument, as I expected, presented the same old familiar face that I had gazed upon so often for the last few weeks, and I seemed to welcome it as a tried and valued friend.

The young man, who looked like one of those commercial travellers who leave Josephus in penny numbers at street-doors upon commission; affected an extremely off-hand, living-in-chambers manner in displaying his property.

"There you are," he said, throwing up the lid; "a piano's all very well, but it don't suit my book."

"You don't play, then?" I asked.

"No time," he replied, "for all that sort o' thing when you're going in for the law."

"No," I said, "I suppose not. The instrument seems remarkably new."

"Does it?" he returned. "I'm no judge. They tell me it's worth eighty sovs., and I want fifty for it. That won't break anybody's back."

"No," I said; "but I don't think it's quite the thing to suit me."

"Say five-and-forty, then. It cost me nothing, and I want to buy a dog-cart."

"I think I must decline," I replied.

"You don't seem to know your own mind," he said.

"I know the piano, though," I returned. "It belonged to one whose sands of life ought by this time to be thoroughly run out."

The young man in chambers said no more, for he saw that I was an exceedingly well-informed man. The instrument was the same one, with the small mark on one of the keys, that I had examined at the house of the venerable-looking secret agent.

I did not give up the investigation even at this point, but passing from these channels of private enterprise to a more public field, I visited a piano that was on view at a hat-shop in a leading thoroughfare. It was still one of the same large family of instruments that was presented to my view, though the man who exhibited it was not made up to perform any particular character, except that of an affable tradesman.

"Music's a nice accomplishment, sir?" he said, as I tried the keys with a very lame performance of the "Merry Swiss Boy," and variations.

"Ye—s," I said, endeavouring to speak without interrupting the flow of harmony.

"Wish I had your touch, sir," he continued. "You must have learnt very young."

"No," I said, affecting not to hear his last remarks, "this instrument's not the one for my money."

"Of course not, sir; certainly not, sir," he returned quickly; "I thought so the moment I heard you run your fingers over the keys. There's no deceiving you, you're too good a judge of the article."

"Good morning," I said, preparing to go, though not displeased by his observations.

"If you'll step up-stairs, sir," he replied, confidentially, "I think I can suit you to a hair, though we don't want it generally known that we sell pianos at a hat-shop."

I went up-stairs, under the guidance of a boy, who took me as far as the second landing, where I was introduced to a long room crammed full of every variety of instruments. The master followed in a few minutes, and seemed astonished that I was standing in the middle of his secret stock, instead of in another department, where he meant me to be ushered to inspect another solitary specimen.

"Well, sir," he said, with some little embarrassment, "since you've been shown in here by that stupid boy, I can say no more. You're a man of the world, and must know that a hat-warehouse is not half full of pianos without a reason. They may be smuggled, or they may be—However, we'll say no more about it, here they are. I hope, sir, you'll take no notice of the singular circumstance."

"Oh, certainly," I replied, "it's nothing to me."

"Thank you, sir," he returned, quickly, "much obliged, I'm sure; and since you are here, if there's any instrument you'd like to select, you may place your hand on any one of them for fifty pounds."

I own that I was weak enough to be deceived by the elaborate train of deception, and that I suffered accordingly. I selected an instrument for a fifty-pound note, which faded away in harmony and appearance before it had been in my possession six months, notwithstanding that it was treated in the most kind and considerate manner. I called in the services of a professional man to effect a cure, and he candidly told me that the operation was impossible. The piano had only one fault, but that was of the most un-reformable kind—it was a bargain bought, in a moment of weakness, at a hat-shop.

TRADE SONGS. THE LAW WRITER.

Thro' the morn, and thro' the noon,
And thro' the night,
And thro' the dull year's hazy light,
To a single dreary tune,
I write—and write.

Sometimes dreams of childhood.

Pierce the dusky room;
Sometimes a bird, upsoaring,
Lifts me above the gloom—
Above the smoke, and the din
That deafens me all day long,
And touches my heart within
Like an old sweet country song.

I dream of the pleasant gardens
That lay by the river side,
Of the banks with a thousand odours,
Of the elms in their plump pride:
I see in the summer waters
The trout dart to and fro,
And I think of the friends departed
Till I scarce know where I go.

Far away is the grassy meadow,
Where I played when I was young,
And the hedge, of maple and hawthorn,
Where the finch and the linnet sung;
Ah! I never shall see the heavens
Where the lark once soared so high,
Never see the soft eyes of my mother,
Until I go home—to die.

For here thro' morn, and thro' the noon,
And thro' the night,
Thro' all the dull year's hazy light,
To a single dreary tune,
I must write—and write.

THE SEXTON.

SEXTON am I of Armouth town:
I dig the graves when the sun is down:
I ring the bell on the Sabbath morn:
I ring the bell when a child is born:
I ring when the poor or the wealthy die:
The herald of good and ill am I.
Yesternorn, when the storm was loud,
I wrapped a miser within his shroud:
Yestereve, in the dusky light,
A spendthrift muttered his last good night.
One lost to the other his useless gold:
I shall bury them both in the parish mould.
A mother is watching, with stony eyes,
In a hut hard by, as her infant dies.
The storm is over; yet out at sea
Three bodies are tossing, awaiting me.
When the tide drives in on the shining sand,
I shall bury them all with a willing hand.

Last week, on a broad red velvet bed,
The Lord of the Parish lay stiff and dead:
Last week, in a box of boards, there slept
A beggar whom wife nor children wept.
One's in the chancel: and one below
In the deep damp hole where the nettles grow.

And so I live on, from day to day,
With the dead—for the starving parish pay.
Wherever they go (below or aloft)
It troubles me not, so the ground be soft.
Yet I know there's a fellow with puckered face,
Who a promise has got of the sexton's place.
"Some night" (he mutters me hoarse and low)
"I shall put thee to bed where the nettles blow."

A LEBANON SHEIK.

BENT upon visiting a wise Sheik on Mount Lebanon, we quitted Beyrout by the road through the pine-forest to the south of the town. Throughout this pine-forest outside Beyrout, the ground in the spring of the year cannot be seen for the flowers, which, although of nearly every known colour and hue, are almost all of the same height, and thus form a variegated, perfumed carpet, spread as far as eye can see. The traveller from Europe notices how many of these flowers are of a sort that in his own country live only in cultivated gardens. Myrtle, lupins, anemones, sweet peas, hyacinths, and jonquils, are common in Syria as daisies in an English meadow. The spring air smells like that of a well-stocked English greenhouse.

Emerging from the pine-forest, our road led us through mulberry gardens, of which the trees were just commencing to throw out their leaves; and, after winding among shady lanes for three-quarters of an hour, we reached the village of Baabda, which adjoins that of Hadet, both belonging to the emirs of the Shehaab family, the leading Christian nobility of Lebanon. A little further on we passed through a corner of the great olive grove, covering nearly twenty square miles, and soon afterwards began, by the usual bad road, the ascent of the mountain.

We halted at the silk factory of an hospitable Englishman, by whom we were entertained in the best English fashion. From the drawing-room of this gentleman's house, is one of the best views to be met with, even in Lebanon. To the north, the coast can be clearly traced as far as Tripoli, with the whole range of Keswan lying parallel to the sea. Nearer at hand is the promontory up which the town of Beyrout is built, together with the city itself, the numerous mulberry-gardens, pine-forest, and a great portion of the immense olive grove, all spread at one's feet like a raised map some ten square miles in size. Between the spectator and the blue Mediterranean are several ranges of mountain, all more or less wooded, all having villages in every available spot, and all varying in the details of their landscape. To the south, the coast can be followed with the eye, until the prospect is lost in the headlands above Tyre, whilst Sidon can be distinguished nearer at hand, and with a good glass the far-off outline of Mount Carmel

is perceived. I had long been of opinion that no person who has not visited Lebanon—I care not in what other part of the world he may have wandered—can know what beauties are to be met with in a landscape of which the eye can at one and the same time take in all the details; but I am equally sure that no one who has not seen the view from the drawing-room window of Mr. S.'s house in Shemlin can fully appreciate the wonderful beauty of the views in Mount Lebanon.

After a very pleasant sojourn of nearly twenty-four hours in the American Protestant seminary at Abeigh, we started for another American missionary station, that of Deir-el-Kamar. Deir-el-Kamar is generally styled the capital of Lebanon, although some natives of the country contend that the title should be given to Zahlie. The population of Deir-el-Kamar amounts to about five thousand souls, and is composed of Druses, Jews, and Christians, the latter being subdivided into Maronites, Greek Catholics, and—recently—Protestants. Ten years ago, an American missionary, named Dr. Eli Smith, was stoned and driven away from this town by an especial order of the Maronite bishop. The alarm caused by the violence of the priests had an effect upon Mrs. Smith that caused her death. Matters are, however, very much changed for the better now. The clergy still continue to hurl their anathemas against all who have anything to do with the heretics' school, teaching, or books, and even forbid their flocks to visit, or sell bread to, the missionary house. But in Lebanon, as elsewhere, the days of bigotry are fast passing away, and during our sojourn of two days with the present missionary more than twenty or thirty of the leading men in the place came to visit him, whilst each evening he had a regular levee of men—his wife having one of women, apart—who came to ask him questions, and receive such instruction as can be conveyed by conversation, upon religion, science, politics, history, and such other subjects as came uppermost in their heads.

My companion, who spoke Arabic perfectly, undertook to examine both schools, without giving any notice to the masters; and, by selecting himself the books on which to question them. The questions I dictated in English, and the answers were translated to me, and I have no hesitation in saying that, in biblical knowledge, geography, arithmetic, geometry, and history, the replies given would have done honour to any lads of their age in England.

From Deir-el-Kamar we proceeded to the palace of Btedin, on the opposite side of the valley, and on our road to Muctava. Btedin was the residence and seat of government of the late Emir-Bechir-Shehab, who ruled over the whole of Lebanon for nearly half a century, until deprived of his power by the English in 1840, when we took Syria from the Egyptians, and restored the country to the Turks. At present the immense range of buildings—considerably larger than the palace of St. James's—is, and has been for some years, rented by the Turkish authorities, who use it as a barrack for

the only soldiers—about two hundred in number—who are stationed in Lebanon. For upwards of forty years the late Emir spared neither trouble nor expense in making his palace one of the most magnificent residences in the East—perhaps in the whole world. The marble courts and marble pillars were erected under the eyes of the best sculptors Italy could produce; there were numerous large Turkish baths—finer than any I have seen in Constantinople—beautiful fountains, and a magnificent Maronite chapel. The mosaic work alone, covering the entire roof and walls of several of the courts, must have cost many thousand pounds. In the days of the Emir, two thousand five hundred persons—including servants, horsemen, followers, priests, strangers, guests, and others—slept every night within the walls of Btedin. At present, although the garrison of Turkish soldiers is only three hundred strong, one third of the number have to be lodged at Deir-el-Kamar, as there are not, in the whole immense palace, a sufficient number of rooms in habitable repair for the accommodation of more men. When we visited the palace we found the three Turkish officers who command the troops crowded into one small room, of about fourteen feet by ten. They told us that during rainy weather there was not another dry place in the entire palace. The stables, in the days of the Emir, held one thousand horses, besides five hundred camels and other baggage animals; at present it was with great difficulty that shelter could be found for two out of the five horses which belonged to our party and the servants. And yet the Turkish authorities have only had the castle ten years in their hands, it having been made over to them in excellent repair. The Turks never attend to repairs, and at Btedin they have allowed their soldiers to break and carry off whatever they pleased of the magnificent ornaments in marble and mosaic which adorned the place. I particularly noticed a magnificent solid bronze gate, which must have cost several thousand pounds when new. The metal upon it had been cut and hacked away with axes, until barely a vestige of the original form was left. So it is, also, with the fountains, which not many years ago were the wonder of Syria, and to supply which water had been brought, at an immense expense, from a very long way off in the hills. At present there is not one of them which is not choked and broken, the water being allowed to run to waste all over the immense court and—once—beautiful gardens of the palace. The gardens, too, are completely overrun with weeds; the trees and shrubs, which had been collected from the four quarters of the world, are withering or dead.

Leaving Btedin about twelve o'clock, we crossed another ridge of the mountain, and were now fairly in the country of the Druses. The Druses of Lebanon are a much finer and more independent race of men than the Christian inhabitants of the mountain. Their feudal aristocracy consists of two families of emirs, or princes, and five of sheiks, or chiefs. The whole Druse population in Lebanon contains from

twelve to fifteen thousand fighting men. Both men and women are divided into Akkals, or those who are initiated into the mysteries of their creed, and Djahils, or uninitiated. They consider themselves a people set apart and chosen by God. In muscular vigour, good looks, and endurance of fatigue, they surpass every other Asiatic race. When in the towns of Syria, they often conform outwardly to Mahometanism, and in their own mountains, if asked by a stranger to show their religious books, always produce a copy of the Koran. It is, however, well known that they have religious works peculiar to their own sect, which they guard with peculiar jealousy in their haloué, or temples. They have no regular priesthood, the Akkals, or initiated, being the only persons who at all differ from their brethren in religious matters. The distinction between Akkal and Djahil, or initiated and uninitiated, has nothing whatever to do with the rank or wealth of the individual, nor is the rank hereditary. The son of an Akkal is a Djahil, unless he may wish to become an Akkal, and can give proof that he merits the distinction. The Djahils eat, drink, and wear what they like; the Akkals must not smoke, nor use coffee, wine, or spirits. The latter are always known by a peculiar round white turban, and by an abay (cloak) of black and white stripes. Strange to say, the Druses of Lebanon believe that there are many of their sect in China, and also in the mountains of Scotland. They have amongst them signs by which they can recognise each other, and they hold secrecy in all that concerns their sect to be the greatest virtue possible. They have a great respect for the English nation, but a dislike to the Turks. In the Sultan's army they will not serve on any account, but I have often been asked during the Indian mutiny whether the Queen of England would raise a regiment of Druses to fight in the far-off East. I am confident that English officers, who could speak Arabic, would be able to raise three thousand Druse soldiers in Lebanon within the space of a month. Shortly after leaving Btedin, we arrived at the tableland, of Sumkaneca. Here there is a large spring of excellent water, and ample space on which many thousand men could assemble. It is there that the Druse chiefs of the mountain meet when they have anything of great importance to discuss. At this fountain we sat down to discuss a luncheon we had brought with us, and were at the stage of pipes and coffee, when a cavalcade of about forty Druse horsemen made its appearance. At its head were the nephew and son-in-law of Syad Bey Jumblat, the Chief of Moktura, who, having heard the day before that two Englishmen intended paying him a visit, had sent out his relatives to bid us welcome. After the usual compliments, we mounted and accompanied our hosts. So long as we remained on the tableland, the followers continued chasing each other on horseback, firing blank cartridge from their pistols and carbines, and otherwise creating both a dust and a disturbance. When the path became so narrow that all were obliged to follow in Indian file, we saw Moktura on the opposite side

of the valley. The house is like a great baronial castle, surrounded by remarkably large olive-trees, planted some distance apart. These seen together with the undulations of the land and the extent of green sward, give the whole property the appearance of an English park placed in a Highland glen. The River Barook flows at the bottom of the valley, turning water-mills, of which some press oil out of the olives, others grind the wheat. The property is very large indeed, extending several miles into the interior on one hand, and down to Sidon on the coast. It contains twenty-eight large, and several small, villages. Syud Bey is considered to be the richest landholder in Syria, having a set rental of nearly four thousand pounds per annum free from debt. He is, moreover, the last of the Lebanon chiefs who has kept up anything like the feudal state of olden times.

On our arrival near the house of Moktura, another nephew of the chief came out to welcome us, attended by two dozen armed retainers. The young man apologised for his uncle's absence from the gate, he being in bad health, and forbidden by his doctor to go out into the open air. We were then ushered up-stairs, and through a hall crowded with visitors, on occasion, business, or ceremony, to a landholder, who was also governor and judge over a vast district of the mountain, holding in his hands full executive power, short of life and death, over all the inhabitants of the territory within his jurisdiction. At the end of the hall was a curtain, screening off the room in which the sheik was holding his court. This curtain was drawn aside, and our host himself came forth to give his welcome. He led us up to the divan, where we were hardly seated when pipes were brought in, but only to the chief, to us his guests, and to his own relatives there present. Then followed the usual fire of Arabic compliments—question, answer, and retort, with a salaam by each party between each sentence; thus:

"Are the gentlemen in good health, has their journey been prosperous?"

"Praise be to Allah, by your favour we are in good health, which is improved by the sight of your lordship, of whom we have heard so much."

"I rejoice to hear what you say; may I not be made desolate by your absence?"

"May Allah not make us desolate by your absence, O Sheik."

Here, according to Oriental etiquette, there was a short pause, and then we inquire:

"Is your lordship's health good? We were most grievously afflicted by hearing that you had been suffering."

"God is great, gentlemen. I have been very unwell, but the sight of you has done me so much good that I now feel well."

"We congratulate your Lordship; may you never know what bad health is again."

"Thank you, gentlemen; may you never be afflicted with bad health."

"Praise be to God!"

Another pause, according to etiquette. Then says the Sheik:

"My house, gentlemen, and all that it contains, are at your service."

"Your favour is great, O Sheik!"

"The favour you have done me in visiting my poor habitation is greater."

And so on, through a string of compliments, not one of which was, according to Eastern good breeding, more unnecessary than the prefixing of "yours faithfully" to a signature would be in England.

On the divan sat the chief, a fine-looking man of about five-and-thirty, evidently suffering from bad health, wrapped from head to foot in a sort of long pelisse, or dressing-gown, lined with the finest fur. By his side sat myself and my companion, both long-bearded, travel-stained, wearing long riding-boots and tweed shooting-jackets, holding also wide-awake hats in hand. Near the divan, but sitting on the floor, were some five or six secretaries, each having before him a number of those wonderfully-shaped pieces of bad Italian writing-paper, upon which all Arab documents seem bound to be written. Next to them were two Maronite monks, in their dark coarse frocks, who had come to see the sheik on some business or other. On our immediate left—close to the divan, but not on it—were the three young relatives of the chief, who had come out to meet and welcome us. Further off was a prisoner, with his hands confined by a log of wood, and guarded by four armed men. This man was accused of murder as well as robbery, and the sheik had been judging his case when we arrived, but he was not removed from the divan during the ceremony of our reception, which he seemed to enjoy as much as anybody present. Beyond the accused stood cultivators, armed retainers, and others, of whom those who could not gain admittance were content to look in at the door. The windows of the room were large, and looked out on as beautiful a mixture of cultivated and wild mountain scenery as the world can produce, whilst in the court-yard below armed horsemen were continually coming or going between the house and various villages with messages or letters. At the castle gate four or five men were exercising some fine-looking greyhounds of the Persian breed, and close to them two lads were feeding the chief's hawks and falcons with raw meat.

Although possessed of no education beyond reading and writing his own language, Sheik Syud Jumblat is a man of good sound common sense, and possesses—with perfect truth, I believe—a great admiration for the English nation, and particularly for Mr. Wood, late English consul at Damascus, and now consul-general at Tunis. The sheik himself, as well as his father, was for many years a prisoner in Egypt, during the time that Syria was governed by the viceroy of that country, and their property was confiscated for a period of twenty years, on account of some pretended disrespect to the then Governor of Lebanon. The restoration of the family from exile was brought about by English influence, but they returned to

find their house in ruins, and their estate, through long neglect, greatly depreciated in value. The present owner has, within the last ten years, done wonders towards restoring both his house and lands to their old value, and already ranks as by far the wealthiest man in the mountain. The family of Jumblat is ranked as the oldest of the Druse houses in Syria, and is said to be of Kurdish origin.

Next morning we were up early, in order to be present at a hawking party ordered in our honour. The Sheik sent us word that, although not well enough to join the hawking party, he would, if we had no objection, come down and take coffee with us before we started; and he soon made his appearance, clad in the same fur-lined gown that he wore the previous day. The conversation turned upon health, when finding that, although no doctor, I knew something of physic, our host asked me my opinion regarding his own case. I soon discovered that the poor man was suffering from a very greatly disordered stomach, with slight jaundice, to cure which his Arab doctor (who resided in the house as part of his establishment) had bled him about twice a week for the last three months, until the patient had become so weak, and had such a disgust for food, that he could hardly sit up for a couple of hours together. The remedy in Syria for every known complaint is bleeding, and confining the sick to a room from which fresh air is carefully shut out for days together. I asked the chief's doctor where he had studied medicine? He replied that his father had studied the science for one year at Cairo, but that, dying suddenly, he had left no one to take his place in the district. Upon which, he (the son), having found several medical works among his father's property, had set up for himself in the same business. I found out afterwards that his whole medical library consisted of four volumes, Arabic translations of Italian medical works printed at Venice during the latter part of the last century. On questioning him as to his success in the art, his reply was that God was great, and that we were all in the hands of Providence.

OCCASIONAL REGISTER.

WANTED

A FEW MORE DISSOLUTIONS.—We have all been informed, on the highest Authority in this country, that the late Parliament has been dissolved, with the view of obtaining an expression of public opinion on the important question of Electoral Reform. Without stopping to ask too curiously whether the present system on which the franchise is exercised in England is likely to lead in a satisfactory manner to the anticipated result, let us accept the announcement in the Queen's speech as asserting a constitutional theory which we are loyally bound to believe will succeed in practice; and let us inquire whether there are not a few other Institutions in this world, besides the Parliamentary Institution, which might follow the Parliamentary example, and be usefully enlightened

by taking the public opinion on the present state of affairs.

For instance, there are the crowned heads of Europe, now paralysing the nations by their murderous resolution to go to war with each other. What a blessing it would be, what an excellent way out of existing difficulties it would furnish, if the august Imperial Institution could only get free access to the public opinion at the present crisis! The meanest capacities could accommodate the crowned heads, in this respect; for the meanest capacities can understand, by this time, that all the glory of war (if there be any) would remain with their masters, and that all the horrors and sufferings and diabolical crimes of war would descend on themselves. Only let the right honourable members for Foreign Thrones dissolve on the English system, and, when the House of All The Royalties assembled once more they would soon know which way to vote, when the question of Peace or War came before them again.

Perhaps, such a proposal as this occupies rather too wide a space, and involves rather too extensive a project of innovation. It may be more to the purpose if we confine ourselves to our own country, and if we inquire whether there may not be found a few Institutions within the compass of these Islands which might follow the Parliamentary example of dissolution greatly to the public advantage.

There is the Royal Academy, to begin with, ripe for dissolution. This incomprehensible Institution urgently wants an expression of public opinion, to decide one of two alternatives in connexion with its future existence. First, whether it is to be a public or private Academy; and secondly, if this point cannot possibly be settled, whether it is justified in its present hybrid character, in accepting a very valuable present of land from a very heavily taxed people, without undertaking the smallest responsibility towards the nation, in return. Let the secret Parliament of Art by all means follow the example of the open Parliament of Politics, and appeal to the country.

The Lord Mayor, again, might surely dissolve, to his own great advantage, in an intellectual point of view. An expression of public opinion might induce him to reconsider his late declaration of his own official infallibility, and might open his eyes a little to the estimation in which his countrymen hold the absurd Institution which he now represents. Will the Lord Mayor kindly consider this, and open the proceedings at the next sitting of the Civic Parliament by dissolving himself and his colleagues, to the manifest advantage of all parties?

The British Drama, too, which has taken so many leaves from so many books not belonging to it, might now take a leaf from Lord Derby's book, and dissolve as soon as possible. An expression of public opinion is greatly wanted by this tottering Institution. Public opinion might awaken it to the necessity of acknowledging on its play-bills the names of the foreign gentlemen who supply plots and characters, as well as the

names of the native gentlemen who use them. Public opinion might impress on it the importance of furnishing itself, one of these days, with a literature of its own, instead of discreditably borrowing from a foreign nation. Public opinion might suggest to it the necessity of preserving its own languishing existence by abstaining from the fatal fault of degrading its audiences, even if it cannot rise to the positive merit of elevating them. All these useful hints, and many more, the British Drama might obtain if it was only regulated like the British Parliament, and if it could only enjoy the enlightening privilege of an occasional dissolution.

The time seems likewise to have arrived when Crystal Palaces might dissolve, and appeal to the country to know whether it had really had enough of them by this time or not. The expression of public opinion would probably be decisive in this instance, and would occupy a remarkably short period in the delivery.

Even a dissolution of Railway Companies would be not an undesirable occurrence at the present time; seeing that the consequent expression of public opinion could hardly fail to open the eyes of Directors, on one or two reform questions of considerable importance. The ruinous competitions between rival lines; the insufficient protection afforded to passengers through the absence of a means of communication between the carriages and the guard; the generally wretched quality of the food and drink at refreshment-rooms, and the almost invariable incivility of the persons appointed to serve in those departments, are all subjects on which the public opinion might be trusted to express itself at the shortest notice, if the Railway Companies would only take the initiative and patriotically consent to dissolve.

Finally, the time seems to be unfortunately only too ripe for an act of self-dissolution on the part of the exponents of public opinion themselves, or, in other words, on the part of the tax-paying public all over Great Britain. Before long, it may become necessary for the nation to take its own expression of opinion on the propriety of consenting to the doubling and trebling of the state burdens already laid on it, by allowing England to share in the inevitable pecuniary disasters of a European War.

BY TRADING POLITICIANS, a little popular interest in a few sham Reform Bills.

FOUND
A N IMMENSE QUANTITY of Public Credulity, in the possession of a select party of professional Spirit-Rappers.

THE MOST DISGRACEFUL STATE-PAPER of modern times, lately issued by three ministers of the Austrian Empire. This shameless document, not only provides for the government flogging of women in Lombardy, but settles that the outrage shall be inflicted on victims who are merely prosecuted as well as on victims who are actually condemned; and

further ordains that the wives of gaolers and their female servants shall be remunerated for performing the flogging, at the rate of fivepence, English, per woman. The ministers who have produced this state-paper are earnestly requested to come to England, and to apply at Messrs. Barclay and Perkins's Brewery, where they will hear of something greatly to their advantage.

A NEW VENUS DE' MEDICI, dug up at Rome. Under present circumstances, the next treasure of sculpture to be disinterred in those regions will probably be a statue of Liberty.

MISSING

A GOVERNMENT MEASURE for the cheap defence of England, by teaching Englishmen the use of arms.

FARMING BY STEAM.

THE poets of modern agriculture, the happy souls who farm a little, write a little, and talk a great deal at semi-agricultural, semi-scientific, and wholly social gatherings, are crying out in joyful tones with more fervour than ever—for it is not the first time—that the doom of the plough has been sealed, and that in five or six years those Clydesdale and Suffolk two-year old colts that now sell readily for 50*l.* will be sold for 20*l.*, and, as for the old hairy-legged breeds, they will be to be had for asking! The more sober, like most of those who live to learn and live by learning, can't go quite so far or so fast. We remember that after more than twenty years' experience the broadcast sheet and the flail still even in England find usage and defenders within sight of the drill and the threshing machine, and that in Scotland crack farmers insist on doubling the work of their men and putting ten per cent. of it on their horses because they won't condescend to examine the value of the Southron-invented Bedford plough. But, although believing that as railroads have not in thirty years closed highways or filled up canals, it is not likely that steam power will ever entirely banish horse power, or even horse-drawn implements from our fields, we must with pleasure admit that 1859 has seen a scratch made on mother earth by the steam cultivation that will in future years be turned to as the mark of a practical advance in a theory that had very long been under the harrows of projectors and inventors.

A thick volume might be filled with the guesses that, in the shape of projects or patents, have preceded almost every really useful invention. The reaping machine may be traced back to the time of the Gauls, wheeled ploughs are to be found depicted in Saxon manuscripts, and something like Crosskill's clod crusher is described as a home-made instrument one hundred years before the Royal Agricultural Society gave the Yorkshireman the clod-crushing gold medal. The French amuse themselves with setting against the triumph of Watt's steam-engine the

ingenious hints of Salomon de Caux, and have written a play, in which the Marquis of Worcester, who was not then born, is made to converse with and rob of his invention the maniac philosopher. Even of the electric telegraph faint traces are to be found in some ancient philosophical manual.

Steam cultivation is one of those long-sought, although only recently caught, arrangements. For two hundred years projectors and inventors in two hundred patents have been guessing without success at the agricultural steam truth; but it does not seem that any attempt was made to cultivate land by steam power on a scale of importance, or in a continuous manner, until 1832, when Mr. Heathcote, of Tiverton, with Mr. Josiah Parkes for his engineer, commenced reclaiming Chatmoss by draining and steam ploughing. The reclaiming did not pay, and the steam ploughing, although continued for two or three years with great labour and ingenuity, did not answer, but the work indirectly led to the construction of the Parkesian theory of deep drainage, by which agricultural England has been revolutionised, and at least doubled in productive powers. The system adopted by Mr. Heathcote and Mr. Parkes, of dragging implements by ropes attached to and revolved by a stationary steam-engine, is the only system which, up to the present time, has been found to answer, although the arrangement of the details and the materials of the ropes have been modified and improved.

In the following twenty-five years sixteen patents were taken out for cultivation by steam power, none of which were carried into execution, and in the last ten years nearly one hundred patents have been provisionally registered, and more than half that number specified. But out of this long array, in March, 1859, not more than six were before the agricultural public as at work, and not more than three prepared to make and sell their patented machinery. But, intermediately, two noblemen, Lord Willoughby D'Eresby, in Warwickshire, and the Marquis of Tweeddale, in Scotland, had expended large sums unprofitably in endeavouring to cultivate by steam traction.

In 1848, the celebrated Talpa, in his *Chronicles of a Clay Farm*, one of the most charming books ever devoted to agricultural disquisitions, suggested that the problem of steam cultivation should be sought, not in the traction or propulsion of the established implements of the farm, but in a rotatory machine, which should dig as it travelled round, and propel, or, as it were, hoe itself forward "with a sort of lobster's tail." On this ingenious idea a great number of inventors have been at work ever since, some at vast expense, but up to the present time not one successfully in an agricultural point of view. On one, the best of the attempts to realise Talpa's poetical notion of perfect steam cultivation, and which often worked admirably for an hour or two, more than ten thousand pounds were expended; but it could never be made to work without the hourly and costly attention of an

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army of mechanics, and, in spite of their aid, it continually broke down. If it were strong, it was too heavy; if it were light, it was too weak; and there the rotatory locomotive theory of steam cultivation rests at present.

By a curious coincidence with the story of the origin of modern agricultural draining, told in the Quarterly Review of April, 1858, the most profitable system of steam cultivation was suggested by an attempt to substitute machinery for manual labour in laying draining tiles. The inventor, Mr. John Fowler, produced before the Royal Agricultural Society, at Gloucester, in 1858, a contrivance for forcing a mole plough, drawn by a team of horses, through the ground at four feet depth, followed by a rope on which a line of drain tiles were strung. Step by step, he substituted a wire rope (a modern invention) for hemp, and a portable steam-engine for horses, but when in 1855, at Carlisle, he had succeeded in laying pipe tiles with great accuracy in soils tolerably level and free from stones, he began, we imagine, to suspect that the great elements of success in machinery—that is, to supersede manual labour, speed, and economy—were wanting. Hence he was induced to moderate his ambition, and be content to plough a few inches instead of burrowing three or four feet; and there, after four years of enormously costly experiments, he has achieved the measure of success we shall presently relate. But he had a successful precursor in a self-taught mechanic—as far as he is a mechanic—and a real farmer, in the person of a gentleman bearing the not remarkable name of Smith, and, therefore, now distinguished by the title of his farm, as Smith of Wolston: a name which, in three years, has become deservedly famous throughout the English-speaking agricultural world.

The general effort of the agricultural improvements of the last twenty years has been to increase the *pace* at which agricultural operations are executed. The first change was to substitute fallow crops, such as roots, for instance, for the absolute barrenness by which land was formerly rested after an exhausting crop—a plan which is still all but universal among the peasant proprietors and métayers of France and South Germany. The second change consisted in making strenuous efforts to execute in autumn a greater part of the cultivation, which until recently it was the custom with the great majority of farmers to execute in spring. It was observed that weeds brought to the surface in the autumn naturally died more easily than in the spring, while the subsoil brought to the surface, and tough clay under any circumstances, was mellowed and ripened by winter frosts and winds.

Mr. Smith of Wolston, was one of the many converts to the system of autumnal cultivation, and in studying the best means of carrying it out he came to the conclusion that the plough which buried the weeds, and left a large percentage to grow again in the spring, was a mistake, and that an instrument which would more nearly approach the action of the spade was the right implement. With this view he invented his

subsoil plough, which stirs without turning over the soil, and his cultivator with curved tines, which breaks up the topsoil without reversing it.

But every farmer who has turned his attention to breaking up strong soils for autumnal cultivation has found himself beaten by the want of power to move the most useful kind of implements, and by want of pace to execute his work during and immediately after harvest before the autumn rains set in. A farmer holding twelve hundred acres of land in two farms of which four hundred acres are arable land, in a stiff clay district, writes us on this subject: "To get these worked up, I should require the power of seventy horses from the middle of August to the middle of September, but fifteen would do all my work for the rest of the year!"

The Farmer of Wolston tells us, in his letter to B. Disraeli, M.P., "that a report of the Royal Agricultural Society on implements called his attention to the resources of steam power." At the Carlisle Show of 1855 he was awakened to the power of steam—ordered a steam engine from Messrs. Ransome and an iron rope and tackle from Mr. Fowler, whose reputation had been established by his tile-laying machinery. Soon afterwards, arose fierce disputes as to priority of invention or adaptation between these two gentlemen; but to the public there is no interest in disputes, the merits of which, as far as the mechanical part of the question goes, few if any can understand or care to understand. As in the old gold and silver shield story, the Farmer and the Fowler are both right, and have separate and not opposing merits.

One certain fact is, that the Man of Wolston first saw and acted on his sound conclusion, that it would be much more easy, simple, and economical, to apply steam power to "cultivators and grubbers," which, to use his own expressive phrase, "smashed up the soil" and brought the weeds to the surface, than the old system of ploughs, which turn over the soil and bury the weeds; and in 1855-6 he successfully applied this system to the cultivation of about one hundred acres of his own farm.

At the Chelmsford Show, in 1856, Mr. Fowler produced his steam plough, which was strictly a plough, being a frame on which six or eight shares were arranged, of which half were at work while the others were alternately carried in front in the air. This he worked with such a measure of success on Mr. Fisher Hobb's farm, that Mr. Hudson, the celebrated agriculturist of Castlere, Norfolk, and a cautious man, there and then declared himself a convert to steam cultivation, and offered to contract for having a good many acres ploughed if a machine were sent.

But, although ever since that day Mr. Fowler's steam plough has been constantly before the public, it was not until the beginning of this year, and until he had become the possessor of some score of patents, and until more than twenty thousand pounds had been expended, that he was able to make a decided stand, and announce

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that he was ready to take any number of orders at a price that farmers could afford to pay.

At Salisbury, in 1857, when the Royal Agricultural Society repeated their offer of a prize of 500*l.* for a steam-plough, Mr. Smith of Wolston, was excluded from the competition by a mistake in the conditions (whether intentional or not we are not able to say), which made it essential that the implement should *turn the soil over*, while, as already observed, it is an essential feature of the Wolston system that the soil should be thoroughly "*stirred and smashed up*"—not turned over.

The ground for the Salisbury trial was not favourable to steam cultivation. Fowler's plough alone, of three competitors, did creditable work: so creditable that the judges and stewards concurred in recommending that a part of the prize-money should be awarded to it. But this recommendation was rejected by a majority of the council. And certainly, up to that date, Mr. Fowler had not produced a commercially useful machine—that is to say, a machine that could be trusted to work on without breaking down, that could be easily moved and set to work, and that could be sold at a price within the means of first-class rent-paying tenant farmers.

In February, 1858, a paper was read before the Society of Arts by a gentleman of well-deserved reputation as a contributor of Prize Essays to the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society, which will become a curious bit of history in a few years; for, the author, wild and wide of the reality of the subject, notices in succession, not only the successful Wolston and since successful Fowler, systems, but half a dozen others, and praises and encourages almost all: even such mechanical absurdities as the Elephantine Traction Machine, which wears itself out hourly as it travels: and a scheme for bottling up compressed air and letting out from mains and elastic tubes to be laid down under and over a farm! and he concludes by recommending an entirely new implement, with a new "cutting and inverting movement," something like a barrel armed with sharp discs driven endways. In fact, the idea of an uninvited machine—a sort of mechanical nightmare to be propelled by an impossible motion!

At the Chester Exhibition of the Royal Agricultural Society in July of the same year Messrs. Howard exhibited Mr. Smith's machinery manufactured by them, and Mr. Fowler his latest modification of his steam-plough. After a serious trial the prize of 500*l.* was awarded to the latter, and the large gold medal to the former. It was considered by the engineers that Fowler had a better mechanical arrangement, and by the agricultural judges that he did at one operation what Smith did at two.

Smith's system, as exhibited by Messrs. Howard at Chester, consisted of two operations. The first with a strong speed-tined cultivator of a sort of anchor shape, which penetrates the ground 6 or 7 inches, tears it up, stirring much deeper than it tears. Secondly, with a larger instrument of the same kind, which, travelling in a transverse direction at the same depth, clears

away any portions surrounded by the first, and reverses the whole topsoil, exposing a rough unequal surface to the action of the atmosphere; the two operations being completed at the rate of 3½ acres per day.

The comparative position of these rival cultivators at the close of 1858 was this: Mr. Fowler, with a costly and ponderous arrangement of machinery, doing very good and rapid work, had won prizes from the Highland, the West of England, the Irish, the Yorkshire, and the English Agricultural Societies in the order named.

Mr. Smith, with an ordinary portable steam-engine, a wire rope, and machinery that cost some 200*l.*, had cultivated his own farm, and reduced it to a tilth and degree of fertility that excited universal admiration, and had sold some twenty or thirty sets of his tackle to purchasers who also worked it successfully: especially in Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Beds, and Bucks.

Thus, while by a series of changes and improvements Mr. Fowler contrived to obtain a greater amount of power and work out of a steam-engine and rope drawing a set of ploughs, better arranged than any of the previous experimenters in the same direction, the Wolston Farmer had better appreciated the capabilities of steam cultivation, and, with the assistance of the most eminent ploughmaker of the day, had produced a set of steam cultivating implements admirably calculated to carry out a system which, for distinction, we should like to name Wolstonising.

"On the Wolston Farm one hundred and ten acres of stiff clay arable land, by drainage and Mr. Smith's peculiar yet simple mode of cultivation, has become as fine and deep in tilth as a market garden, and requires just as little trouble to keep it in a clean and healthy condition." A writer in Bell's Messenger describes a field of ten acres at Wolston from which a tenth crop was about to be taken, in 1858-9, *without fallow*. "For five years this field had never been turned over on the old principle of ploughing."

Agricultural public opinion having been thus ripened, a great step in advance was made the other day by Mr. Fowler, which reduced the weight of his apparatus, exclusive of the steam-engine, from three tons and a half to about twelve hundredweight, and the price from about 450*l.* to less than 250*l.* for a set of tackle and implements capable of performing every process of cultivation on arable soil, still retaining everything that was valuable in his successive improvements. If this be so—and we believe it is—then we may expect to see steam cultivation, within a very few years, introduced on every farm of deep retentive soil which now possesses a portable steam-engine, and on hundreds of farms to which it will make its way, bringing with it the steam-engine and divers other contingent improvements.

The following is an attempt to describe the working of the two systems—a very difficult task without the illustration of diagrams.

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Mr. Smith uses an ordinary agricultural portable steam-engine of from eight to ten-horse power, which he fixes at one corner of a field, for choice of from ten to twelve acres. In front of the engine is a windlass, or capstan, with two drums, of a peculiar shape, with a coil of wire rope around it; and this rope is led over four anchored pulleys one at each corner and along each side of the field. The windlass attached to the fly-wheel of the steam-engine by a driving band can be instantaneously driven in either direction. Four different ploughs, or cultivators, are used, as occasion requires. To the bow of the one in use, two ends of the rope are attached. An engine-driver, a man at the windlass, a ploughman, an assistant to shift the pulleys, and a boy, are the staff required. The plough cultivator begins by travelling along the more distant side of the field, between the two anchored pulleys; at the end of the first journey the pulley in front is shifted, the engine is reversed, and in thirty seconds the plough is travelling back; and thus, by alternately shifting, bringing up each of the two most distant anchors, strip by strip the whole field is "smashed up" in parallel lines to the spot where the engine stands.

His plough No. 4 consists of a very strong frame, in which are fixed three subsoil ploughs, with a pair of wheels in front to guide it, and above the centre another pair to regulate the depth. The shares for breaking up clay soil in autumn are set to work six or eight inches deep (a depth impossible with horse power). The "points of the shares become imbedded in the subsoil, and the whole mass, nearly a yard wide and six or eight inches deep, is torn from its position, and more or less mingled together, leaving for the most part the weeds or grass which it is desirable to destroy near the surface." An implement of greater breadth and more tines on light and moderately tenacious soils has been made to move more than ten to twelve acres in a day. But for a description of the four Wolston cultivators those further interested must refer to the inventor's own pamphlets and pictures. The obvious drawback of the system consists in the loss of power by the friction of the rope along four sides and consequent indirect traction. Common farm labourers have been repeatedly and easily taught the duties of Smith's system of steam cultivation. According to universal testimony, nothing can exceed the quality of the work and the satisfactory result in crops of all kinds.

Mr. Fowler employs a portable steam-engine with a series of drums whose axle is fixed vertically beneath it; a wire rope, passed round the drum of a movable anchor, is stretched across the field to be ploughed, and the two ends are made fast to the plough, thus forming an endless rope. In working, the engine and the anchor move along the two headlands in parallel lines, and the plough before described, or any other implement — Mr. Fowler has been converted to the cultivator — moves forwards and backwards between the engine and the anchor by the reversing gear of the engine. It is evident that under this arrange-

ment the action is more direct, less rope is required, and less power lost by friction than in the Wolston system. It is to be regretted that an arrangement has not been made by which Smith's admirable cultivators could be attached to Fowler's steam power; for Smith wisely repudiates ploughing, and "takes his stand on cultivation;" and it seems likely that on farms with fields of moderate size, and soil of not the most tenacious character, the Wolstonising plan will continue to be preferred. The results of Fowler's cultivation before he had succeeded in reducing the cost and weight of his apparatus to a portable and saleable standard, is well described in Morton's Farmer's Almanac, in a report of the Highland Society's trial at Stirling, in November, 1857: "The trenching plough (Cotgreave's) excited the greatest enthusiasm. Everybody knows the difficulty and expense of ploughing two furrows deep, and the time and labour necessary to reduce enormous furrow slices into a comminuted state. But this implement drawn at a speed of three miles an hour, turned down not a tough whole slice, but one of loose mould into the trench left by the preceding bout, and lifted up from an average depth of 12½ inches, and spread upon the top, not heavy, unwieldy masses, but divided and pulverised, a stratum of subsoil, equal to good digging by hand, at one-third or one-fourth the price." Now, in a paper read at the Central Farmers' Club in June, 1857, by Mr. Bond, which had the effect of giving an extraordinary impetus to the practice of autumnal cultivation of clay soils, and indirectly to steam cultivation, he described himself as using a common plough with two horses, followed immediately by a scarifier with six or eight horses, working at harvest time, as soon as the sheaves were shocked in rows, and these two implements went over the land twice: that is to say, they required labour equal to from sixteen to twenty horses to do less than two acres a day; and he added, thus confirming the theory and practice of the Farmer of Wolston:—"The common plough is not suitable for autumnal cultivation; it buries the weeds instead of bringing them to the surface."

With these extracts we pause, and sum up with the following elementary information for the benefit of our bread and beef eating non-agricultural readers:

Stiff clay soils were the favourite farms of our forefathers in the days of the rudest agriculture, because they gave good crops in dry favourable seasons, with very little or no manure, and received on the rest of a fallow more quickly than light, or sandy, or chalky soils, for reasons which the chemists of this last quarter of the nineteenth century have discovered. But sheep-treading, root cultivation, or, as it is commonly called, the Norfolk system, brought light and chalk soils into favour, as arable farms and clays were neglected and left to poor farmers. When the Parkesian system of systematic, deep, thorough drainage was completed and established by an almost solitary successful instance of Government interference in a

daily bread business (we mean Peel's Drainage Loan), retentive soils regained a certain degree of favour. With the help of pipe tiles corn could be secured even in wet seasons, and sheep fed where sheep were unknown in the days of shallow bush drains. But retentive clay soils, in spite of systematic drainage, had, and have, a disadvantage which was little felt a hundred years ago, when a farmer could afford to go to sleep for half the year, before "rapid concentrative," or what the French happily call intensive culture, was known. It requires extra horse power to work it; it can scarcely be worked at all when it is damp; and in damp weather the treading of horses' feet on clay does incalculable damage. Modern requirements insist on every acre being continually under crop, or seed, or labour. Clay districts, from their peculiarity, have fewer working days than less retentive soils. Clays, modern experience tells, as shown above, should be cultivated deeply, and in the autumn, as they are neither mellow nor clean in the spring, and the clay farmer who misses his autumn is running after his work all the following year, and never overtakes it.

It is not then necessary to enter into the question affirmed by the Royal Agricultural Society's Judges at Chester, and disputed by some sceptics, that steam cultivation is cheaper than horse labour—although we believe it; but we may rest the success, the triumph, the progress of steam cultivation on the fact that it can do an essential work of deep autumnal cultivation, which no number of horses practically yokable could do at all, with the rapidity peculiar to steam power, and without the enormous disadvantage of the consolidation of trampling horses' feet. Thus the drill saves the dry days of the sowing season, the reaping machine saves the harvest season, the threshing machine saves and supplies the market, the steam cultivating engine saves the cultivating season and multiplies by six or eight fold the value of every day, dry enough to stir the soil on the old plan at the rate of an acre a day: thus increasing the crops to a degree that it is scarcely safe to state. With that unanswerable conclusion we will conclude content—although inclined to agree with the Farmer of Wolston that on most farms of three hundred acres and upwards, of tolerably level land, a well-applied steam-engine will save one-third of the horse power, and do the work twice as well as horses can do it, even on light land.

A friend inquires, "What about Halkett's Guide system of steam agriculture—the railway-farm system?" Why, this only—that it is perfectly practicable, but would cost to apply about one-third more than the fee simple of most farms.

A THOUGHT FROM PHANTASTES.

I HAVE a bitter thought: a snake
That used to sting my life to pain;
I tried to cast it far away,
But every night, and every day,
It crawl'd back to my heart again.

It was in vain to strive or try
To live, or sleep, to work, or pray;
At last I bade this thing accursed
Gnaw at my heart, and do its worst:
And so I let it have its way.

"Thus," said I, "I shall never fall
Into a false and dreaming peace,
And then awake, with sudden start,
To feel it biting at my heart,
Since now the pain will never cease."

But I gained more; for I have found
That such a snake's envenomed charm
Must always, always find a part,
Deep in the centre of my heart,
Which it can never wound or harm.

It is coiled round my heart to-day;
It sleeps at times, this cruel snake,
And while it sleeps it never stings.
Hush! let us talk of other things,
Lest it should hear me and awake.

PILGRIMAGE TO THE VALLEY OF DESOLATION.

"WELL, yes, jolly Yorkshire coachman with the apple-face, to the Valley of Desolation!"

We are tired of Ben Rhydding and wet sheets, we know all the illustrated whimsicalities of the water-cure by heart; the gossip and scandal of peaceful Ilkley falls dead, now, upon our ears. We have eaten trout enough; we have climbed Rumbles Moor amid the black-faced sheep, through the slate-coloured quagmire, over the brown gorse, to the disturbance of grouse; we have halted half-way up the mountain to drink from the peerless pool; we have lit a pipe, sitting upon the wreck of the old beacon, and we have stood upon the crowning height of the Cow and Calf, whence we have seen stretching, to the west far off, Arthur's seat, that slopes from the ruins of Bolton Abbey; to the east, the winding Wharfe, rushing to the Humber. Yes, we have seen the stone bridge under which the boiling stream roars. Thank you, we are not interested in Sir Timothy's seat, although Sir Timothy is a Bar. No; to the Valley of Desolation be it.

Ay, wondrously varied is this craven valley. Be careful down this slope, where the Wharfe rolls past, some hundreds of feet below, into the boiling waters of which a slip of the horse would cast us, note-book and all. It is a gusty day. At the top of the hill we shall catch the squalls. Ay, coachman, that was a stout blow. You are right, there must have been a fresh hand at the bellows then. Rattle through the white toll-bars (I wonder when they will disappear from the face of merry England); swing round over Bolton-bridge, past the emerald meadows where the black sheep are gravely nibbling, with milk-white lambs at their side. To the little thatched inn, decidedly; not to the fashionable little hotel for visitors.

Welcome? Thank you, we see we're welcome. Mrs. Winterburn, and we pass nimbly over your chalked steps, under the creaking, weather-beaten Red Lion. Into your kitchen, roofed with hams (they never keep them four years now, to mel-

low, as in the old time, alas!) and curled oatmeal-cakes. We can see our blousy faces in your polished pewter dishes. And we promise ourselves some of the pendent oatmeal, with your freshest butter, and clearest ale, before we trust ourselves in the Valley of Desolation.

Ah! that is "jolly good ale, and old!" and now for the Desolate Valley. We'll scud across the meadows towards the grey ruins of Bolton Abbey, under the shadow of the bare brown mountain on our right, dotted with deep grey, tumbled stones. Let us turn our back upon his grace's shooting-box, built from the abbey ruins, a thing to turn one's back upon, and dip our fingers in the holy water cup that clings still to the crumbling walls. Dead leaves lie in the rain-water, and tint it with a deep yellow. Ay, in this cup the shrivelled and plump fingers of hooded monks have been dipped, as the reverend gentlemen passed solemnly on their way to pray for the dead boy of Egremond. Tumbled columns all around, grass upon the altar steps. The battle between ivy and lichen silently going on. A most irregular burial-ground in the shadow of the ruins; there the moss has grown into the names of long-dead villagers and squires. With the Wharfe, eddying and rushing and foaming past, as it foamed when it held in its liquid coils the corpse of the boy of Egremond, when the wail of the childless Lady Adeliza just floated upon the air, when the masons first turned the earth, and lay the foundations of the abbey, that pious men might chant near the river which had drowned the boy! The very murmur that now floats upon my ears under my wide-awake, beat against the tympanum of disconsolate Lady Adeliza, and will hold on, when over me lies heavily a stone notched and green as this at my feet, with moss in my name, and when the worms have done their worst with the body of which I am so careful, and to strengthen which I am here at this moment.

How here and there the dead would speak to us from the earth under our feet, printing their words deep in the stones upon their bosoms! George Demayne, who was laid here in 1797, is still saying,

Remember, you that do come nigh,
As you are now, so once was I;
As I am now, so may you be—
Prepare yourselves to follow me.

But Time is almost even with him. Into the "remember" he has poked enough moss, almost, to obliterate it. A grey mould lies in patches athwart George Demayne's name, which Time, with his blurring finger, has smeared there, and which is to eat into the syllables. The old man has notched the stone also with his scythe, and in other ways intends to show that he will have the upper hand in this world always.

But we are yet more than a stone's throw from the Valley of Desolation, as our red Yorkshire coachman, who is waving his whip to us from the road, high up the hill, would have us bear in mind. Let us follow the boiling, eddying, frolicsome Wharfe, where the willows

dip into its little waves; where sturdy rocks peep above its tide, and defy the force of its current; where overhanging banks of green deepen the tints of its bosom, and cast dead leaves upon it. Ay, through this dense wood, between the hills, to the fatal Strid, or Stride. Along paths winding round rocks covered with a thousand mosses and cushioned upon a thousand feathery ferns; where the branches of overhanging trees must be pushed aside—where to the right and left there are impenetrable depths of green shade; treading upon damp, dead leaves, that yield an indescribable—a chilling fragrance. And all the leafy wilderness alive with the songs of birds, the twittering of insects in the underwood, the burr of the bees seeking anemones. The splendid natural tracery of embracing branches overhead, the ivy climbing about the elms, and the moss gathering upon the ivy, and the tiny beetles in the moss-cups! Let us stare through spectacles, or peer through the microscope, and still be glad in the vast and varied harmonies of this abounding nature. The roar of the foaming Strid breaks through the dense and almost pathless wilderness upon our ears. Begone, ruddy coachman! and wait for us at the opening to the road.

Through the tangled branches we may notice a white mist in the distance. This mist is from the splashing Strid. It was there when the drowning cry of the boy echoed through this ancient forest. It was there when a poor gentle girl stood upon the slippery rock, and the boiling waters fascinated her giddy head, and she cast herself into the torrent. We see the Strid, with its vast coils of waters, gliding, like great merciless serpents, round the tumbled rocks to the narrow precipice. Very daintily tread we the splendid confusion of rocks—here smooth with the polish of the passing current, there deeply bored by the sharp eddies, and there again smeared with an olive slime—to the very edge of the precipice, where stood the boy with his hound, and thought the Stride narrow enough for a safe jump—where stood the gentle, giddy girl. At our feet a chaos of jarring, foaming waters, roaring with the anger that has lasted a thousand years. In these immortal rocks, some "G. H. Leeds" has cut the initials by which his vulgar soul is known—in these immortal rocks, with the roaring Strid to contemplate, and the echo of the boy's wail to be heard in the distant woods!

True, this is a pic-nic place, where woollen workers disport themselves, perched high above us; where the trees shoot horizontally from the hill is the moss-house—roof, walls, table, seats, all green, soft moss. From this romantic height spreads the broad valley to Bolton, with the bold, bare, brown Arthur's Seat, dotted with sheep, and ragged with grey rock that crops out from its stony heart, shutting in the prospect. Water is gurgling down the mountain sides in all directions—now a silver thread, and now a ferruginous, golden coil. An old postage stamp lying upon the moss-table deadens to us the echoes of the boy's voice; champagne corks,

lying here and there, destroy the sweet savour of the solitude. For, we are told, the men who come to eat and drink aerabouts, see in the vast forest bowl, which the valley lays far below us, only so much space into which they may cast empty champagne bottles. Scraps of letters lie about amid the ferns, and moss, and leaves. Very black-faced sheep are at hand, with dead leaves clinging to their ragged wool; and they stare at us, asking us what our business can be in this ample solitude—we, who neither nibble grass, nor gather pollen from the flowers, nor munch sweet roots. Well, we shall not long disturb our inquiring, meek-eyed friends, but leave them with their white lambs, to their fate, and caper-sauce. We go skipping—like mountain goats with the rheumatism—from stone to stone; creeping through leafy caverns and over bulging roots, down and still down to the Wharfe; some way off, an it please you, from the Strid. Just, indeed, to that point, where the waters are spread and shallowed, over a broad and an even bed, and where the Strid's scattered foam floats in flakes, like water-lilies. We ford the stream here. It is giddy work, but we are eager to be in the Valley of Desolation. It is stiff work up the steep hill, still through the forest, to the grey, weather-beaten old farm on the crown of the slope. But see, an old oak—it is said some thousand years old—at the farm-house gate! It has fallen in two, and half the trunk rests now upon its topmost branches, which are buried in the earth. The centre of the trunk is so much dust; yet does the old giant bear a few acorns every year. The farmer—glad to speak with passing travellers in his solitude—shuffles out to meet us, and is garrulous. Ay, the old tree bore five acorns last year, and he keeps them in a bottle.

"Plant them," we said. "Make no break in Nature's circle. Consider that, it may be, from the sap of this oak grew the planks that bore Blake and Nelson to victory. It may be that many of our ships of war, which 'guard our native seas,' are but the babies of this expiring giant." But the old man shook his head. Nelson only recalled to him the days when "Boney" was expected in England; when fires had been prepared upon the lofty summit of Arthur's Seat, to be lit when the invader had landed; and when meat was as dear as it is now. The old man, being a keeper of sheep upon the hills, would not have proved in-consolable, it would appear, had the match been put to the beacon fire. Courteously the ancient tiller of the soil, and shearer of great flocks of sheep, directed us on our way, through his own orchard, past his spacious kitchen (we confess we could have tarried in that cosy chimney-corner for a few minutes, if only to count the hams and sides of bacon above us), and pointed across a field, where his team was dragging a steady plough, into a deep, mysterious valley.

The Valley of Desolation—and wherefore? It is difficult to describe a wilderness of rock, and root, and branch, with wild streams tumbling amid the ruins, in all directions; a wilderness where everything is dead, or dying. Where there are trees, by dozens, riven in twain by the destroying lightning. Where charred branches dangle from trunks in which some weak sap still sluggishly moves. Where even the bridge, constructed of boughs, to enable the wayfarer to cross the stream near the waterfall, has fallen in, and lies in mad confusion amid the rocks and rushing waters. Where a rough hut, with a roof like Robinson Crusoe's hat, is propped against a ledge of blue rock, and into which the trunk of a dead tree has been rolled, that the luxurious student of a natural wreck may eat his crust and sip his pitcher of water in comfort. At every yard sharp blue rock jets out of the brown earth, defying man to sow seed here. Not a green spot for the eye to rest upon. Not a tree straight and flourishing; but all in contortions, charred and broken. Here is one, indeed, that, in mortal agony, has endeavoured to turn a somersault, and throw its roots in the air, leaving its crown upon the earth. But it expired—its ambition only half satisfied—its crown just twisted back to the earth. Another ghost of the Valley of Desolation—an old oak, with almost human arms: dead—with two sockets burnt in the crown of its gnarled trunk. Here, in short, nothing prospers save death. The sheep are lean that try to nibble a stomachful from the dry, grey grass. Bees wander hence, angrily, to the flowers that bloom lustily upon the banks of the Wharfe. The wayfarer treads hastily through the voiceless solitude. It would seem that even cottagers decline to gather here the abundant dead wood.

"Take us back at a smart pace, Yorkshire coachman of the ruddy cheek, to Miss Winterburn's snug parlour. Let us speedily see the black beams of the old house above us; and, at the point of our fork, some of that homely food that makes stout-hearted men, for which you are celebrated hereabouts. She will have found some trout, too, for us, I know."

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